

# Driver's License

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In order to drive in Japan, you must hold a Japanese driver's license or an International Driving Permit.

## **International Driving Permit** (こくさいめんきょしょう 国際免許証 Kokusai Menkyoshou)

An International Driving Permit is a document issued by countries adhering to the Geneva Conventions. These permits are valid for one year starting on the day you enter Japan or until the permit expires, whichever date comes earliest. Those intending to drive in Japan for longer than one year must convert to a Japanese license.

※Those exiting Japan for less than three months at a time may not reset their international driver's validity period.

## **Foreign Licenses** (がいこくめんきょしょう 外国の免許証 Gaikoku no Menkyoshou)

Residents of Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, and Taiwan may drive for one year in Japan without an International Driving Permit, provided they hold a Japanese translation of their home country license while driving.

## **Converting a Foreign License to a Japanese License**

Takikawa residents who have a valid foreign license that was first issued at least three months prior to entering Japan can convert their license at the Sapporo Driver's License Center (さっぽろうんてんめんきょしけんじょう 札幌運転免許試験場 Sapporo Unten Menkyo Shikenjou). Licensing procedures vary based on country of issuance, but in most cases, a Japanese license will be issued to qualifying applicants contingent on a written test and a road test. Certain countries are exempt from the road test. Please contact the Driving License Center *before* reporting in person to arrange a test time.

### Items Necessary for License Conversion

1. A valid foreign driver's license.
2. An official translation of the foreign driver's license. (Translations are issued at embassies, consulates, or the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF).)
3. A residence certificate (じゅうみんひょう 住民票 Juminhyou) that includes your nationality. (Those ineligible for the National Registry must provide a passport. Those bearing Japanese nationality must provide a residence certificate listing their permanent residence.)

4. Proof that the applicant was in the country of issuance for longer than three months following the issuance. (Your passport or other documentation.)
5. A residence card or a valid alien registration card.
6. One photo. (3cm x 2.4cm, no background.)
7. Your personal seal. (A signature is also acceptable.)
8. Money for processing fees.
9. A driver's license application. (運転免許申請書 うんでんめんきょしんせいしょ Unten Menkyo Shinseisho) (These are available at the Sapporo Driver's License Center.)

Sapporo Driver's License Center (札幌運転免許試験場 さっぽろうんでんめんきょしけんじょう)

TEL 011-683-5770

Teine Ward, 5-Jou, 4-Choume (From JR Teine Station, about 15 minutes by bus)

※An appointment is necessary for license conversion.

JAF Sapporo Branch (JAF札幌支部 さっぽろしぶ)

TEL: 011-857-7155 (Toyohira Ward, Tsukisamu Higashi, 1-Jou, 15-Choume, 8-1)

URL: <http://www.jaf.or.jp/>

(Japanese/English)

Foreign licenses can be translated at embassies, consulates, and Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) offices. JAF also provides traffic rule handbooks in five languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Korean).