

Changing a foreign driver's license to a Japanese driver's license



1. Conditions to change to domestic license

Those who fulfill the following conditions can change their foreign driver's license to a Japanese one at the Aichi Driver's License Center or the Higashi Mikawa Driver's License Center.

a. Having a valid officially-issued foreign driver's license

b. Having stayed in the country issuing the foreign driver's license for a total of 3 months or more after obtaining the license

We will verify whether you stayed in the issuing country for a total of 3 months or more using your passport, foreign license, and other documents. In some cases, you must also provide immigration certificates, old passports, or the driving record for your foreign license.

2. Time and place for application

In Aichi Prefecture, applications for changing a foreign driver's license to a Japanese driver's license need to be booked online in advance. Please access the website below, select the date (from Monday to Friday), place which you want to apply and enter the necessary information to reserve.

People who cannot speak or understand Japanese should come with an interpreter.

a. Driver's License Center

People who finish the document screening before 1:30 p.m. can take the senses test and knowledge test on the same day. The practical skills test is held the day after.

b. Higashi-Mikawa Driver's License Center

At Higashi-Mikawa Driver's License Center, we have two-stage document screenings. Please book the first document screening in the frame of weekday afternoon. People who passed the first document screening can book the second screening.

Website for reservations

【Aichi-electronic application system(Aichi Prefectural Police)】

<https://www.shinsei.e-aichi.jp/pref-aichi-police-u/offer/>

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3. Required documents

a. Foreign driver's license

b. Japanese translation of foreign driver's license (translation must be issued by a government office of the country of the foreign driver's license or by the embassy or consulate in Japan of that country or the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) or ZIPLUS Co.,Ltd. Translation by an individual or translation by companies other than above offices will not be accepted.)

c. Passport (Those who have multiple passport should submit all of them.)

d. Residence Card

e. Certificate of the residence (jyuminhyo) with mention of nationality (A photo copy is not acceptable.)

f. Japanese driver's license if you have one.

g. Identification photograph for the license application taken within the last 6 months (no hat, facing forward, head and shoulders only, plain background, 3cm x 2.4cm)

Depending on the country, you may need to submit additional documents.

4. Senses, knowledge and a practical skills test

If you pass the document screening, the senses test, the knowledge test, and the practical skills test, you will be issued a driver's license.

Those who had a Japanese driver's license in the past may be exempt from the knowledge and practical skills test, so please submit your nullified Japanese license or driving history certificate.

a. Senses test

The senses test is a test of eyesight, hearing, color recognition and physical ability. Make sure to bring your glasses, contact lenses, or hearing aid if you use them.

b. Knowledge test

In the knowledge test, you are asked about basic Japanese traffic rules. You can choose the language of the test from among 12 languages including Japanese, English, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Persian, Vietnamese, Russian, Turkish, Thai, and Urdu.

In order to get a Japanese license, you must know Japanese traffic rules, otherwise you will fail the knowledge test. You can prepare for the knowledge test by studying a foreign language version of the Japanese traffic rules book, which is available at Japan Automobile Federation (JAF). Questions are true or false and you will pass the test if you answer 7 out of 10 correctly. People who pass the knowledge test will be notified of the date and time for the practical skills test.

c. Practical skills test

This test not only checks your driving ability but also evaluates your knowledge of traffic rules, vehicle operation, and posture during your driving test. The results will determine whether you pass or fail the test. For example, in Japan, when you turn left, after turn on left signal, and check the safety on the left side by looking in the rearview and side view mirrors, then check your blind spots with your eyes, you must approach the left side of the road in advance. To pass the practical skills test, you need to understand traffic rules in Japan well. Study Japanese traffic rules thoroughly before taking the test.

If you fail the test, the examiner will give you some advice. Though the advice is in Japanese, it can be very useful for the next test. The application procedure for the next practical skills test will be easier and smoother if you understand this advice in Japanese, so we recommend that you come with someone who can understand Japanese if you don't understand Japanese.

For the driving test, you need to bring an admission ticket, a driver's license application form, Japanese driver's license if you have one, your residence card, foreign driver's license of your country, and a ticket for using the test car. In addition, if you need a pair of glasses as a required condition, make sure to bring them. You cannot take the test if you are wearing too baggy clothes or shoes not suitable for driving, for example, sandals. Examinees for a two-wheeled vehicle license should wear a helmet, gloves, boots, a long sleeve shirt and trousers. If you pass the practical skills test and do the paperwork, you will be issued a driver's license on the same day.

5. If you need to retake the practical test

If you pass the document screening, senses test and knowledge test, you can reapply for the practical skill test for the next six months. However, applications for the practical skills test are increasing and there is sometimes an overflow because there is a growing number of people applying to change foreign licenses to Japanese licenses.

There are many people who cannot pass the practical skills test within six months and have to take all the tests again. Before taking the practical skills test, please study traffic rules in Japan and practice driving skills in driving practice facilities in order to pass the test. Even after getting your Japanese driver's license, be sure to drive safely to avoid becoming the cause or victim of an accident.

AICHI Police YouTube Official Channel



Driver's License Center



Higashimikawa Driver's License Center