

8.3 Conditions on driving in Japan

To drive in Japan, you must have one of the following licenses (The Road Traffic Act, Article 64 and 107-2)

1. Japanese driver's license

2. International Driving Permit(IDP)

Only International Driving Permits (IDPs) issued by a signatory to the **1949 Geneva Convention** in conformity with the Convention's provisions are recognized as valid for driving in Japan. An IDP on the other conventions or treaties, including the 1969 Vienna Convention, is invalid even if it is issued by a signatory to the 1949 Geneva Convention.

[Convention on Road Traffic Geneva, 19 September 1949]:

[United Nations website](#)

[Japan Metropolitan Police Department website](#)

In addition, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- a) The IDP shall be valid for one year from the date of issue while you shall be allowed to drive with it for one year from the date of your entry into Japan.
- b) If you are a registered resident in Japan, you shall spend more than three consecutive months overseas prior to the reentry. (The Road Traffic Act, Article 107-2)

3. Valid Foreign Driving License in Japan

Driving licenses issued by the authorities of **Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, Monaco and Taiwan** are valid in Japan under the following conditions:

- a) A Japanese translation provided by the authorities that are stipulated by the applicable cabinet order is attached to your driving license.

The authorities stipulated by the cabinet order are as follows:

- 1. The license-issuing authority, the embassy or consulates of the issuing country in Japan.
- 2. The Japan Automobile Federation (JAF).
- 3. The Japan-Taiwan Relations Association (for Taiwanese license holders).
- 4. The German Automobile Federation (ADAC) (for German license holders).
- 5. ZIPLUS Co., Ltd.

- b) Must be less than one year since the date of your entry into Japan.

- c) The so-called "three months rule", which is stipulated in Article 107-2 of the Road Traffic Act has not been violated.

Note: Rally Japan Secretariat can apply for a Japanese translation to JAF on your behalf.

Fee: JPY12,000 (including translation fee and other expenses)

Application deadline: **Friday, 19 September 2025**

Contact: entry@rally-japan.jp

The term of validity of the translation issued by JAF is the same as that of the driver's license, which means the translation can be used until the expiration date of your driver's license. However, you need to obtain the translation again upon renewal of your driver's license or when an item indicated on the license is changed, for instance by change of address.

4. Transferring your country's license to a Japanese license (except for license type 1,2 and 3)

If you are licensed by an administrative agency in a foreign country, you may apply to obtain a Japanese license for a vehicle that can be driven with that license by partially exempting yourself from the test. (Article 97-2, Paragraph 3 of the Road Traffic Law)

Please note that from 1 October 2025, the system for converting licences to Japanese licences as described above will be made stricter, and short-stay tourists and similar visitors will generally no longer be eligible. Holders of licences from countries not covered by points 1, 2, or 3 above who require conversion to a Japanese licence to participate in the rally must apply on the premise of obtaining a Certificate of Eligibility and a Performance Visa. Furthermore, proof of residence in Japan issued by a public authority will be required to verify a Japanese address. Due to these changes, it may not be possible to accommodate requests after the entry deadline. Please ask the secretariat for advice by the

deadlines below.

Note: Only **crew** (drivers and co-drivers) participating in the FORUM8 Rally Japan 2025 are eligible for Rally Japan's assistance in obtaining a Japanese driver's license. Please contact us as soon as possible.

Application deadline: **17:00 hrs -JST, Monday, 15 September 2025**

Contact: entry@rally-japan.jp

Note: A visa is one of the requirements for entering Japan as defined by the "Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act", and it does not guarantee to enter Japan. Visas are issued at the Embassy, Consulate-General, Consular Office of Japan abroad. They cannot be obtained when you arrive in Japan or while you are staying in Japan. The "landing permission" is granted by an immigration officer at the port of entry when a foreigner meets the requirement for entry into Japan. The "status of residence" is mentioned on your "landing permission", that indicates the activities you are permitted to perform in Japan. Please note that sometimes people say "visa", it may refer to the "status of residence". For example, people often mention as "changing visa" when they mean "renewal/change of the status of residence."

Useful links:

[Foreign Driver's License and International Driving Permits](#)

[Valid Driving License in Japan](#)

[Driving a Motor Vehicle in Japan](#)

[Traffic Rules](#)

[Rules of the Road](#)

[National Police Agency - Traffic Bureau](#)