

Mobility: Immigration alert

February 2021



Japan

Immigration information: As of 3 February 2021

Executive summary

Japan bans all new entries of foreign nationals

The government of Japan has announced the temporary suspension of the Phased Measure for Resuming Cross-Border Travel. In effect, all new entries of non-resident foreign nationals, including those through the “Business Track” and “Residence Track” frameworks, are now banned, at least until the state of emergency declaration is lifted, which has been extended to 7 March 2021. This measure has been put in effect since 12:00 AM, 14 January 2021 (JST).

All those entering, re-entering or returning to Japan are required to submit a “Certificate of Negative Test Result” of a pre-entry COVID-19 test conducted within 72 hours from the time of departure

Individuals who can re-enter or return to Japan, including Japanese nationals and special permanent residents, are now required to submit a Certificate of Negative Test Result of a pre-entry COVID-19 test conducted within 72 hours from the time of departure. (hereinafter referred to as “Certificate of Testing for COVID-19”), as well as go through a COVID-19 test upon arrival, regardless of his/her nationality or place of stay. Those who cannot submit the “Certificate of Testing for COVID-19” are required to stay at a location designated by the chief of the quarantine station.

Entry from the UK, South Africa, Ireland, Israel, and Brazil (Amazonas)

In addition to obtaining a “Certificate of Testing for COVID-19”, all Japanese nationals and foreign nationals with a status of residence entering, re-entering or returning to Japan from the UK, South Africa, Ireland, Israel, Brazil (Amazonas) and countries whose authorities have announced the confirmation of domestic infection of new variant of coronavirus, are required to self-quarantine for 3 days at a location designated by the chief of the quarantine station (only at accommodations booked by the quarantine office). On the third day of the self-quarantine, they are required to take the COVID-19 test again. Those who test negative at this point will be allowed to go home or move to another accommodation but must self-quarantine at home/ accommodation until the end of the 14th day after entering Japan. Further, they are required to pledge to keep their location information and to install the COVID-19 Contact-Confirming Application (COCOA) upon entering Japan.

New points were added to the “Written Pledge” and sanctions on the violation of the “Written Pledge” have been re-announced

All those entering Japan, including Japanese nationals, are required to submit a “Written Pledge” for complying with the following points:

- ▶ Non-use of public transportation
- ▶ Self-quarantine at home or a place of lodging
- ▶ Preservation of location information for 14 days after entry to Japan

The new "Written Pledge" now states that one entering Japan must agree to disclose his or her location information upon the public health center and other institutions' request. Further, the government has announced that those who violate the pledge will be subjected to sanctions such as having his or her full name and other information that contributes to preventing the spread of the infection made public for Japanese nationals, and in addition, revocation of the status of residence and deportation order for foreign nationals holding a status of residence.

Some typical questions and answers from foreign nationals wishing to enter Japan:

I am to be seconded to a subsidiary in Japan and already received a visa from the embassy

- ▶ You are not allowed to enter Japan at least until the state of emergency declaration is lifted, regardless of your current place of stay. All non-resident foreign nationals, including those who have a valid visa issued under the "Business Track" or "Residence Track" framework, are now denied entry to Japan.

I have been hired by a company in Japan and received a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) but have not yet applied for a visa

- ▶ Embassies and consulate-generals are currently not accepting visa applications unless your situation falls under the "special exceptional circumstances," such as being separated from family in Japan or entering Japan with a "medical services" status of residence to contribute to Japan's medical system.¹
- ▶ Please hold on to your COE until the embassy/consulate-general of Japan with jurisdiction over your place of residence starts accepting visa applications again.

I am to be transferred to Japan in April

- ▶ You can apply for a COE at Japan's immigration services agency through your accepting entity in Japan. After receiving your COE, you will be required to apply for your work visa at the Japanese embassy/consulate-general with jurisdiction over your place of residence.
- ▶ However, Japanese embassies/consulate-generals are currently not accepting visa applications, so please hold on to your COE until the embassy/consulate-general of Japan that has jurisdiction over your place of residence starts accepting visa applications again.

I am currently residing in Singapore and need to come to Japan to attend a business meeting

- ▶ You will not be able to enter Japan. Entry through the "Business Track," which had been available for those in Singapore since 18 September 2020, has temporarily been suspended.

I am a holder of a Japan Residence Card (RC), and left Japan with a re-entry permit

- ▶ If you hold a valid RC and left Japan with a re-entry permit or under the special re-entry system, you will be allowed to re-enter Japan regardless of your status of residence, current country of stay, or date of departure.
- ▶ However, you must submit a "Certificate of Testing for COVID-19."
- ▶ You will also need to sign a "Written Pledge" upon entry to Japan to refrain from using public transportation, self-quarantine at home or other designated areas and retain location data on your smartphone for 14 days. You must also agree to provide the location data to health centers and other institutions if requested.
- ▶ Those returning from the UK, South Africa, Ireland, Israel, Brazil (Amazonas) and countries whose authorities have announced the confirmation of domestic infections of new variants of the coronavirus are requested to stay at specific accommodation facilities designated by the chief of the quarantine station and will be required to take the COVID-19 test again on the third day of arrival to Japan. Those who test negative may leave the accommodation facility and self-quarantine at home or another accommodation during the remaining period of 14 days after entering Japan.

I left Japan under the special re-entry system with my RC, but may not be able to return to Japan before the re-entry expiration date

- ▶ If your re-entry (or special re-entry) permit expires, you will be required to re-apply for a COE through your company. Once you receive your COE, you must apply for an entry visa to Japan.¹
- ▶ A visa will be issued for you as a person having "special exceptional circumstances."

Foreign nationals currently residing in Japan:

I wish to leave Japan to visit my family abroad and return to Japan using the special re-entry system

- ▶ You may leave Japan and return under the special re-entry system.
- ▶ However, we advise you to apply for a re-entry permit, rather than use the special re-entry system, if you have more than 1 year until the date of expiry of your residence card. The re-entry permit will allow you to stay abroad until the date of expiry of your residence card.¹
- ▶ Please note that currently, you are required to submit a "Certificate of Testing for COVID-19" and sign a "Written Pledge" upon your arrival to Japan. Please see above.

Japanese nationals and special permanent residents:

I am a Japanese national returning to Japan after an overseas assignment

- ▶ You can enter, re-enter or return to Japan.
- ▶ However, please note that you are also required to: 1) submit a "Certificate of Testing for COVID-19"; 2) sign a "Written Pledge" upon entry to Japan for refraining from using public transportation, self-quarantine at home or other designated

areas and retain location data on your smartphone for 14 days. You must also agree to provide the location data to health centers and other institutions if requested.

- ▶ In addition, Japanese nationals returning from the UK, South Africa, Ireland, Israel, Brazil (Amazonas) and countries whose authorities have announced the confirmation of domestic infections of new variants of coronavirus are requested to stay at specific accommodation facilities designated by the chief of the quarantine station and will be required to take the COVID-19 test again on the third day of arrival to Japan. Those who test negative may leave the accommodation facility and self-quarantine at home or another accommodation during the remaining period of 14 days after entering Japan.

¹ For further details, visa consultations and entry/re-entry support, please contact EYGH.

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