

Kocoforre News

Issue 4: Summer 2023

"Kocoforre" is the nickname for the Kochi Consultation Center for Foreign Residents



The sun is shining bright outside, and it finally feels like summer. Have you been enjoying your summer so far? In Kocoforre News, we introduce our center's activities and useful information for foreign residents of Kochi, those who are connected with foreigners, and people interested in multiculturalism.

Topics

Switching Your Foreign Driver's License to a Japanese License



Driver's License Center
 200 Edagawa, Ino-cho,
 Agawa-gun
 Testing Manager Phone:
 (088)893-1244
 Weekdays 8:30~17:00

In this issue, we will guide you through the process of converting a driver's license obtained overseas to a Japanese driver's license. Those living in Kochi Prefecture can convert their license at the Ino-cho Driver's License Center. First, you must undergo a preliminary screening (document submission and an interview). Later, you will need to take and pass the aptitude test (vision test, etc.) and the written exam, and then you will take the practical exam*. Once you pass the practical exam, you can get your Japanese driver's license.

*Some countries are exempt from taking the written and practical exams (29 countries as of June 2023). Those holding licenses from the following countries may receive their Japanese license after passing the preliminary screening and the aptitude test:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the United States of America (states of Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington only).

1. Preliminary Screening (document submission and interview)

Call the Testing Manager at the License Center (088-893-1224) and **schedule** an interview. Make sure to bring the required documents to the interview. Document processing takes between a week and a month.



Required Documents

- Foreign driver's license (must be translated; the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) can translate it for you)
- Passport (or other document showing that you resided for over 3 months in the country where you received your license)
- Residency certificate (including nationality and domicile)
- Residence card
- International driver's license (for those who have one)
- Japanese driver's license (for those who had one in the past)

Foreign license translation service:
<https://jaf.or.jp/common/contact/global-support>
 Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) Kochi Branch:
 19-28 Kitakubo, Kochi City
 TEL : 088-882-0311

2. Aptitude Test, Written Exam, and Practical Exam

Those who pass the preliminary screening must schedule another appointment to take the aptitude test, written exam, and practical exam at the Driver's License Center.

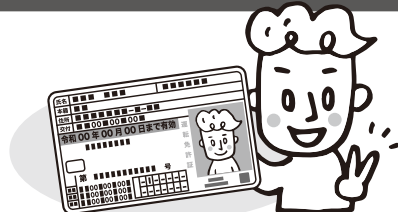
1. Take the aptitude test and written exam



2. Take the practical exam



3. Receive your driver's license



What to bring

- Eyeglasses or contact lenses (for those who usually wear them)
- 1 ID photo (must be taken within the last six months and be 3cm long x 2.4 cm wide)
- Required documents
- Handling fee (regular license: 2,550 yen; motorbike license: 1,500 yen)
- License issuance fee (2,050 yen)

Q&A

Q1 What is the written exam?

A It is a test consisting of 10 questions about Japanese traffic laws, etc.

Q3 Can I bring an interpreter with me?

A You may be accompanied by an interpreter during the interview and the aptitude test, but not during the written and practical exams.

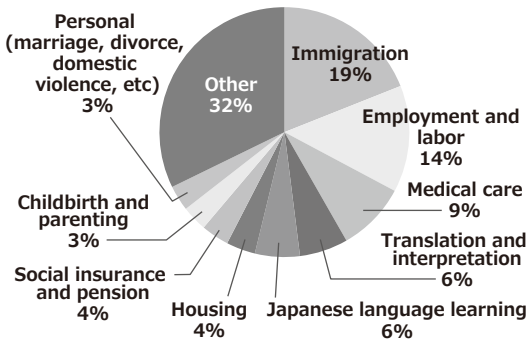
Q2 Can I take the written exam in a foreign language?

A In addition to Japanese (with furigana), the test is also available in English, Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Farsi, Russian, Thai, Tagalog, and Indonesian.



Highlights of Kocoforre's Activities (April 2022-March 2023)

Consultation Breakdown (April 2022-March 2023)



This past year, Kocoforre handled 638 consultations. In addition to foreigners, we also received consultation requests from companies, government offices, and Japanese residents with connections to foreigners. Apart from working with clients at the Consultation Center, Kocoforre also held visiting consultation sessions in other localities, and set up consultation spaces at international affairs-related events where foreigners and Japanese people with connections to foreigners could stop by to speak with us.

Last year, there was a large number of consultations regarding immigration procedures. Cases about obtaining permanent residency and changing residency status to long-term resident or spouse of a Japanese citizen, etc. were especially numerous. Due to the relaxation of COVID-19-related border restrictions over the past year, we also received consultation requests regarding visas and quarantine measures when entering Japan and other countries.

Employment and labor consultations included cases related to job hunting and career change, as well as inquiries about part-time work from students studying abroad in Japan. Residence status is a big factor in foreign residents' employment.

Other consultations were made about a wide range of topics, including schooling for children coming to Japan from abroad, My Number cards, COVID-19 vaccines, loan repayment, and traffic accident compensation.

Announcements from Kocoforre

Company Visits

Kocoforre staff visits companies to meet with foreign employees and introduce them to Kochi Prefecture and the foreigner community here, and give them useful information about life in Kochi from a foreigner's perspective. We also hold get-togethers (with interpretation available) where participants can ask questions or express worries about their life in Japan in an informal setting. For more information, please contact Kocoforre.

Upcoming Career Fair

Sept. 24th (Sun) 13:00-17:00
Kochi City Culture-Plaza CUL-PORT

A career fair for job-seeking foreigners will be held in Kochi Prefecture. Participants will be able to speak directly with representatives from local companies interested in hiring foreign employees. The Immigration Bureau and the Labor Bureau will also be represented, so participants will have the chance to ask about technical matters such as residence status and work. Kocoforre will also be participating. Further details will be posted on Kocoforre's website and social media accounts.

Free Legal Consultations Now Available at Kocoforre

Legal consultations held at Houterasu can now be conducted at Kocoforre, too. Consultations are available for foreign nationals and naturalized citizens living in Kochi Prefecture whose income and assets are below the designated threshold. Lawyers from the Kochi Bar Association will provide legal consultations (excluding consultations regarding criminal cases).

By holding your legal consultation at Kocoforre, you can rest easy about two things:

1. No pesky language barrier!
You can consult with lawyers in your native language. Interpretation will be provided by consultants or interpreters at Kocoforre or a three-party telephone interpretation service.

2. We're with you every step of the way!
If you hold your consultation at Kocoforre, we can continue to follow up with you about your case, and we can also advise you on non-legal matters.

■ For more information, check Kocoforre's website ↓
<https://kccfr.jp/shiteisoudanbasha-20221215/>



Kocoforre Consultation Sessions with Specialists

*Details will be posted on Kocoforre's website and social media as they are finalized

Date	Consultation Session	Location	Description
September 9 th , 2023 (Sat)	Shimanto City On-site Consultation	3 rd Floor of the Shimanto City Office (Address: 4-10 Nakamura Oohashi-doori, Shimanto-shi)	Immigration Bureau staff will be available for in-depth consultations regarding residence status. Kocoforre consultants will also be available to discuss general concerns about life in Japan besides residence status.
December 10 th , 2023 (Sun)	Nankoku City On-site Consultation	Nankoku City Chiiki Koryu Center MIARE! (Address: 2117 Oosoneko, Nankoku-shi)	
February 2024	Tosa City On-site Consultation	TBA	
Late September 2023/Late February 2024	Free Legal Consultation Week for Foreigners	Kocoforre (Address: 4-1-37 Honmachi, Kochi-shi)	Lawyers will be giving free consultations to all clients regardless of financial means (excluding corporations).

Website



Available in Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, and Vietnamese.

Instagram



Useful information on living in Japan is posted in simple Japanese and foreign languages.

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