

Safety Measures for International Students

For the safety of international students, this article describes the following topics as follows. 1) Housing safety measures, 2) Crime prevention measures, 3) Traffic accident response, and 4) Risk due to lack of Japanese language ability, common sense, or carelessness. These risks can be prevented by insurance and ordinary precautions.



<https://ja-jp.facebook.com/ebetsu.freephoto/>

(C)江別市

Rowan (Nanakamado) flower language is “prudence” and “safety”

Safety Measures for International Students

The following is a note of precautions for international students to stay safe in Japan. Many of these are common knowledge in Japan. Since international students will live in Japanese society, we hope that they will quickly learn the following common sense and become a part of this society.

Risks to yourself or others can be avoided with insurance to some extent and can be managed by ordinary precautions. We hope you will take care of your safety in your daily life and enjoy a meaningful abroad experience in Japan.

1. Housing safety measures

1) Apartment Selection

a) Check the building's seismic resistance and safety at night.

The new standard of seismic resistance for buildings was established in 1981, and the seismic resistance has improved. In addition, the standard was revised in 2000 for wooden houses and in 2006 for condominiums. After the turning point (the time of the revision of the standard), the newer buildings will have higher seismic resistance⁽¹⁾.

It is important to note that the date of construction is different from the date of acceptance of the building permit application. It generally takes several months from the start of construction of a house to its completion for a wooden house and nearly one to two years for condominiums. The date of acceptance of the application for a building permit is much earlier than the date of construction⁽²⁾. If the date of acceptance is not after the revision time of the standard of seismic resistance, this standard will not apply.

b) From the viewpoint of earthquake damage and crime prevention, It is recommendable that you choose the second floor or higher. Check the evacuation route.

c) After choosing the first choice apartment, take a walk from the station or university to your new residence in the evening or at night. And make sure that there are many

¹ 井上恵子 新しい家ほど耐震性は高い? 耐震基準の変遷、(Keiko Inoue: The newer the house, the higher the earthquake resistance? Changes in earthquake resistance standards, 2018) <https://allabout.co.jp/gm/gc/379955/>

² 所有する建物が新耐震か旧耐震か調べる方法(How to find out if your building is new or old, 2017) <https://taishinsekkei.com/info/investigate/#~:text=新耐震基準で建て,た日付が境目です。>

pedestrians on the street and that the streetlights are bright.

2) Earthquake countermeasures

A big earthquake will cause power outages, water outages, gas outages, traffic disruption, and store closures. Buildings may collapse, and fires may break out. Prepare at least three days worth of water, food, toilet packs, flashlights, and spare batteries for cell phones and other devices. Please read Disaster Prevention Yokohama (36-page English booklet)⁽³⁾. Scan the QR code on the right. Check the evacuation route (evacuation hatch, etc.) in case of emergency.



3) Fire in Apartment

Some apartment rental contracts require the purchase of damage insurance. Please confirm its coverage. If necessary, you may want to supplement any shortfalls with damage insurance provided by the University Co-op.

4) Damage to downstairs household goods due to water leakage and other responsibility to others.

The University Co-op offers insurance that will compensate for the damage.

5) Damage and theft of household goods

Damage to furniture, bikes, and household goods can be covered by adding a special agreement in the damage insurance sold at the Co-op.

Various other types of insurance are also available at the University Co-op.

2. Crime prevention measures⁽⁴⁾ (call 110* to report incidents and accidents) *Dial 110 without an area code.

To avoid becoming a victim of crime, please be prepared to "protect yourself. Be aware that the perpetrators have targeted you before committing the crime. The key points of concrete countermeasures are "be inconspicuous" "Prevent your behavior from being foreseen" and "be vigilant".

1) Be inconspicuous

Do not wear eye-catching, showy clothing or ornaments.

It is also important to be a good neighbor by not making noise at home, obeying garbage

³ https://www.city.yokohama.lg.jp/kurashi/bousai/kyukyuu-bohan/bousai-saigai/keihatsu/bo-saiyokohama1.files/0008_20180913.pdf

⁴ 外務省・海外安全のための三原則 <https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/pamph/pdf/overseas2013.pdf>、
神奈川県警防犯ポイント <https://www.police.pref.kanagawa.jp/mes/mesd0095.htm>、

disposal rules, etc.

2) Prevent your behavior from being foreseen

Avoid habitual behavior (do not pattern your behavior), such as repeating a walking route when you go out, for example, jogging every morning.

3) Be vigilant

Always check the door locks when you go out and are at home. If you have a visitor, open the front door without removing the door chain after checking the intercom, etc. Suspicious persons posing as couriers may break-in. If you have no idea who the person is, it's preferable not to respond. You can have your package left outside the door.

- Avoid going out alone at night (especially from 0 AM to 7 AM) or on deserted streets. Always be on the lookout for people who are following you. Do not look down when walking. Pay attention to the movement of people in front of, behind, and to the left and right of you.

Walking while looking at your cell phone or listening to music is dangerous because you may not be able to know if a suspicious person is approaching you.

- If a suspicious person approaches you while you walk, run away immediately and run to a nearby store. If the person has arms, do not resist, and act with your life and personal security as your primary priority. Even if the person appears to be alone, there may be hidden persons nearby. It is important to keep away from suspicious people in lonely places.

- Be aware of your surroundings when riding in an elevator. Get off immediately if a suspicious person enters the elevator. When opening the front door of your home, check your surroundings and open it to prevent a suspicious person hiding in the shadows from breaking in. There have been cases where a suspicious person got off the elevator one floor below the residential floor, ran up the stairs and attacked the resident from behind at the moment when opening the door.

- If a stranger speaks to you, do not trust them unnecessarily, and be wary if they talk to you in a friendly manner. Do not believe the other person's words one-sidedly, and not make an immediate decision. Consult a third party.

- When on public transportation, keep your bag closed so that no one can look inside. Do not leave your phone or other valuables at your seat in restaurants. Keep notes of your credit card number and the phone number of your credit card company in case of emergency.

- Do not walk with your shoulder bag hanging on the roadway side. There were cases where a motorcyclist riding with two passengers snatched a bag that a pedestrian was carrying on the roadway side, causing the pedestrian to fall over.

- Lock your bike in two places. Register your bike for security purposes and park it at a bike parking lot. If you park your bike outside of the parking lot, it may be collected as an abandoned bike, and you will be fined a fee (1,500 yen) to pick it up. Please do not ride bikes as much as possible. There are many traffic accidents involving bikes. There is an international student who suffered a theft near the Kenmin Center

- Do not carelessly disseminate personal information (name, address, telephone number, schedule of activities, etc.) on social networking services, etc., and do not make it known to unspecified persons. Medias containing the information above must be deleted or shredded before being thrown away.

- Student ID cards and residence cards may be required to show at public institutions such as the police, city hall, post offices, and banks for identification purposes. However, please do not show or give them to strangers. Your personal information may be misused.

- It is safer to carry your residence card, bank card, and cash separately. When you lose them (dropped, misplaced, or stolen), please report them to the police immediately. Copies of your cards will help you prepare the lost property report. One student submitted such a report but never found the lost items.

3. Traffic accident response (call 110; call 119 for help for injured persons)

If you get hurt by a car, call 110 immediately and ask an officer to come to the accident site. At the same time, have the assailant present his/her driver's license, liability insurance card, and voluntary insurance card. Take memos of his/her name, address, car number, certificate number, place of employment, and the location of the

accident site. Take the photographs and secure witnesses⁽⁵⁾. Even if you do not have all this information above, inform the accident and the damage to the police. If you do not leave evidence with the police, they will not be able to issue a "Traffic Accident Certificate" later⁽⁶⁾.

Do not accept the settlement without reporting the accident to the police. Even if there was no pain in the accident, symptoms might appear later. So please see a doctor as soon as possible.

Your health insurance will pay for the treatment of your injuries. If you have National Health Insurance, you must submit a "Report of Injury or Illness Caused by Acts of a Third Party" to the city hall or ward office⁽⁷⁾. However, please note that if you receive the medical treatment fee from the offender before seeing a doctor, you will not be able to use your health insurance.

4. Risk due to lack of Japanese language ability, common sense, or carelessness⁽⁸⁾

Risks for international students include lack of information due to insufficient Japanese language skills, lack of common sense, and lack of negotiation skills. Please note the following to avoid serious disadvantages.

(1) Be sure to submit all necessary official applications and notifications. It is essential to open and look at the documents received from the government office and apply by the deadline. Do not neglect the application. Some international students worked part-time jobs without permission and got a tentative decision for employment in Japan. He submitted an application form for permission for a change of status of residence for

5 国土交通省 自動車総合安全情報 自賠償ポータルサイト、実際に事故にあったら (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; Automobile Comprehensive Safety Information; Liability Insurance Portal Site, If you actually have an accident!)
<https://www.mlit.go.jp/jidosha/anzen/04relief/accident/correspondence.html>

6 自動車安全センター(Center for Automotive Safety)
<https://www.jsdc.or.jp/certificate/tabid/113/Default.aspx>

7 横浜市国民健康保険のページ、交通事故にあった時は、(Yokohama City National Health Insurance page, When you are involved in a traffic accident)
<http://www.city.yokohama.lg.jp/kenko/kokuho/accident.html>

8 吉田 孝志 : 法律からみた外国人留学生の生活リスクマネジメント 留学生教育学会第 17 回研究大会一般発表 (2012) <http://www.jaise.org/ni-dlbox/17A16.pdf> を参考にまとめました。(現在、この URL は無い)
(Yoshida, Takashi: Risk Management of Foreign Students' Life from Legal Perspective, The 17th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Association for International Students Education, 2012)
Now, this URL is not available

getting a job in Japan. He was questioned about his financial support and was requested to show additional bank books. Finally, he could not get permission.

(2) If you injure a pedestrian while riding a bike, you must rescue the injured person and call 110 or 119. Please make sure to do so. If you cause a serious accident by disregarding a traffic signal, etc., you will have to be arrested and fined for a traffic violation⁹. If you have student liability insurance, you can compensate for damages. The University Co-op also offers other types of insurance, so it is a good idea to compare them.

(Student Liability Insurance: 1,800 yen/year, University Co-op Insurance Service, 2019)

(3) When driving a rental car, make sure to follow the rules of Japanese traffic. Voluntary insurance is mandatory. If you cause a serious accident, you will have criminally, administratively, and civilly liable, and you will have to suffer the consequences. Do not commit the three evils of traffic (driving without a license, driving under the influence of alcohol, and driving over the speed limit).

(4) It is a crime to work a part-time job, such as receiving goods on behalf of someone else that you did not order, making purchases with someone else's credit card, or withdrawing cash from someone else's bank account. Do not accept such offers, as there is always a flip side to every good deal.

(5) In Japan, the right to private property is legally guaranteed, and violating this right can lead to troublesome situations.

- Do not park your car in a vacant lot. The owner of the vacant lot may appear and demand an exorbitant fee. Also, if you park on a private road (often without a no-parking sign) without permission, you will receive complaints, so make sure to ask permission before parking.
- In general, when borrowing something that belongs to someone else, make sure to ask or get permission before doing so.
- If you ride an abandoned bike without permission, you may be arrested on a charge of theft. If you face prosecution, you will be punished by imprisonment for not more than

⁹ 神奈川県警察 自転車に乗るときのルールとマナー(Kanagawa Prefectural Police Rules and Manners for Riding Bicycles)
[神奈川県警察/自転車に乗るときのルールとマナー \(pref.kanagawa.jp\)](http://pref.kanagawa.jp)

ten years or a fine of not more than 500,000 yen.

- Do not put your belongings in a locker at work without permission. Always ask the locker manager for approval before storing your belongings in it.
- When you have permission or approval to use, there is no need to apologize if someone else complains. Apologizing is an admission of wrongdoing and may result in compensation with money.

Some of the above mishaps have long-lasting effects and are difficult to repair. In some cases, mishap history will remain, and you may get punished. Please do not hesitate to consult with government offices, universities, etc., when you have any questions or difficulties in negotiations and discussions.

For your safety and security, please keep the above comments in mind. Be inconspicuous. Prevent your behavior from being foreseen. Be vigilant.

I hope you spend your university life safely during your stay in Japan, exchange with Japanese people, and enjoy Japanese culture.

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