

Driving Test/Buying, Registering, and Maintaining Cars

Driving Test

To drive any vehicle (private or Government owned) in Japan, you must be properly licensed with a U.S. Forces, Japan (USFJ) driver's permit. Specific qualification and testing requirements must be satisfied before installation commanders may issue these licenses. One of the requirements is that applicants must present a valid (current) operator's permit issued by any state or territory of the US or by the District of Columbia; an international driver's permit, a valid Government of Japan operator's permit; or written proof that they have successfully completed a certified formal driving course. See [USFJ instruction 31-205 \(Para 2.2.2.1.1\)](#) for the definition of a certified formal driving course. A certified formal driving course, as defined by USFJ, is currently not available at CFAY Yokosuka. Therefore, if you intend to drive while in Japan, you should arrive with the necessary prerequisites to obtain the USFJ driver's permit.

A pre-requisite to obtaining a Drivers License at CFAY is proof of attendance at the Area Orientation Brief / Inter-cultural Relations Class (AOB/ICR). This class is offered every Monday through Friday on every week that does not contain a federal holiday. AOB/ICR is facilitated by the Fleet and Family Support Center. The Driving Indoctrination Class immediately follows the Friday morning AOB/ICR wrap-up. This class, facilitated by the CFAY Safety Office, will familiarize new arrivals with Japanese driving laws, signs and customs. Call 243-3372 for AOB/ICR registration and class location.

Driving Testing is done by appointment only. Study materials are available on this site or can be obtained from the License Office or by attending Area Orientation Brief / Intercultural Relations Class (AOB/ICR). For location, Hours of Operation and to make an appointment, call 243-5647 or go to the office in person. Proof of attendance of AOB/ICR is a pre-requisite prior to making an appointment.

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka License Instruction with Flow Charts:

COMFLEACT INSTRUCTION 5800.2F

Study Materials:

[Important Features of Japanese Road Traffic Law \(Word Document - 2 MB\)](#)

[International and Japanese Road Sign Charts](#)

[Navy Driver's Handbook](#)

[Motorcycle Safety Information](#)

For Vehicle Registration Information: Contact VRO at 243-5011.

Buying a Car

When purchasing a car, please take into considerations that when living and touring off-base many of the streets are very narrow. You need to decide if a small car or large car would best fit your particular living situation. There are some condos with parking spaces which are elevator style and will require a certain dimension for cars to be parked.

There is an area on-base (far end of the commissary parking lot-across from the school's basketball court) where cars are available for resale. There are also used car dealerships located off-base.

Before buying a car talk to your sponsor and learn about JCI- a bi-annual safety inspection / mandatory insurance, and about obtaining additional insurance and the road tax (due in April); so you can select a car that meets your needs. Keep all of the above information in mind when budgeting for a car - it will add up to more than the initial price.

Registering a Car

Note: This process can take from 1 to 2½ weeks on average. ***Cars must be registered in the service member's name.*** If anyone other than the sponsor—even a spouse—is arranging the registration, a Power of Attorney (POA) is needed. One can be obtained at the Legal Office onboard or at the Legal Office on-base (Phone: 243-5141) on the 2nd floor of PSD, across from the Fleet and Family Support Center.

For any questions about the following process, contact Vehicle Registration Office (Phone: 243-5011).

Steps you need to do:

1. Obtain a valid driver's license (USFJ Form 4) as part of Area Orientation Brief.
2. Find a car you like. Talk to other people who have been in Japan for any opinions on types of cars or prices for cars. *
 - a. E-4 and below need approval from their CO and CFAY Security Officer to own a car.
 - b. Buy from – Lemon lot – located next to commissary, individuals, etc. The sellers on this lot can be a good source of information on the registration process.
 - c. Buying a car in town may mean longer wait time for title (>5 days).
3. Get base inspection & JCI for car (on-base) if due.
4. Get liability insurance for car (located in Auto Rental Building between Navy Lodge and Autoport Gas station).
 - a. The newer the car, the longer the coverage period needed (<37 months).
 - b. Insurance is paid for up front!
5. Vehicle registration

On-base

- a. Take all the info to the Vehicle Registration Office (VRO, across from Fleet Theater) including endorsement from Housing office/Navy Lodge/BOQ (You need to have done housing brief by now.)
- b. Take endorsement to City Hall, Yokosuka and get temporary plates (~Y750) if needed. (If transferring ownership from an individual, the permanent plates can transfer to the new owner.)
- c. Get on-base temporary parking pass from VRO.
- d. Back to VRO to get paperwork to take to Yokohama Land Transportation Office (LTO)—recommend looking in back of Seahawk paper for people who will do this for about \$40.
- e. Take all info to LTO (including temp. base parking pass) and car to get plates.
- f. Take temporary plates back to City Hall.
- g. Final vehicle registration with VRO & base pass issued.

Off-base

- a. Have copy of signed lease agreement & take to VRO. VRO will let you know which police station to go to.
- b. Go to City Hall and get temp plates if needed.

c. Go to appropriate police station and apply to get parking space at your home inspected, which takes about 3 to 5 days to process. (Application may be denied if your car is too big to fit into your space.)

d. Go back to police station on appointed day and get parking sticker issued (Y500).

e. Go back to VRO and get appropriate paperwork for LTO.

f. Get plates from LTO and return temp plates to City Hall if applicable.

g. Get final vehicle registration from VRO & base pass issued.

Auto Maintenance:

The *Autoport* on-base can do basic repairs and will assist in making appointments at car dealerships located off-base. They have maps to the various dealers and will provide translation assistance over the telephone when you are at the dealership. The *Autoport* also provides car towing services. On-base towing costs have a minimum charge of \$30. Towing further than 3 kilometers costs an additional \$2.25 per kilometer. For example, to tow a vehicle from Negishi housing to the *Autoport* at Yokosuka would cost \$150.00. For oil changes, some people go off-base to a business called *Autobacs* which has many locations, but apparently they speak a little English at the one located just south of the base near *Living*.