

The background of the slide is a dark, out-of-focus image of city lights at night, creating a bokeh effect with various colored circles (yellow, white, red, blue) scattered across the frame.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

FOR SOFA LICENSED DRIVERS

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook covers common elements of Japanese traffic regulations and laws, where applicable, for Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) sponsored personnel, i.e. U.S. armed forces, government civilian employees, family members, and contractors.

INTRODUCTION

The operation of privately owned vehicles (POV) within Japan is considered a privilege agreed upon between U.S. Forces Japan and the Japanese Provincial Government. Like all high-level agreements of this nature, adherence to local laws and regulations are critical to ensure the agreement remains in good standing. Driving privileges can be revoked through formal Traffic Court adjudication or simply through command administrative action based on the desires and needs of the commander.

INTRODUCTION

The operation of a motor vehicle within Japan carries similar responsibilities and consequences as operating a motor vehicle in the U.S. with few exceptions. A significant difference under Japanese law involves categorizing anyone with a motor vehicle operator's license as being a "professional driver". While driving in the U.S. is more or less taken for granted these days for anyone 16 years of age or older, Japanese citizens must devote considerable time and money toward obtaining their license through a government approved professional driving school. As such, traffic accidents that result in personal injury or death frequently result in criminal prosecution under article 211 of the Japanese Penal Code, "Injury or Death Through Occupational or Professional Negligence."

INTRODUCTION

Penalties can be costly and at-fault drivers will typically be subject to the Japanese traffic law. SOFA licensed drivers are subject to steeper fines and more severe penalties for non-injury related traffic offenses such as DUI/ DWI, speeding, and illegal parking.

INTRODUCTION

Traffic signs used throughout Japan are considered international standard road signs. Vehicle operators licensed anywhere outside the United States should find the road signs depicted in Appendix A recognizable.

This handbook includes traffic safety regulations/requirements while operating a motor vehicle on Marine Corps Installations in Okinawa specifically. Personnel licensed by and/or operating motor vehicles aboard Kadena Air Base (Air Force) and Torii Station are subject to the provisions written in Kadena Air force Instruction 31-204 (Kadena Air Base Motor Vehicle Traffic Supervision) and United States Army Regulation Japan Supplement 1 AR190-5 for Torii Station.

This handbook is generic in nature and does not cover every possible scenario a SOFA licensed driver may find themselves faced with when operating a motor vehicle on/off base. Drivers are reminded to remain vigilant, obey all traffic laws, and drive defensively at all times to ensure safe navigation of a motorized vehicle during your overseas tour.

An aerial photograph of a multi-lane highway bridge spanning a body of water. Several cars are visible driving on the bridge. The water is dark blue with some ripples. The sky is not visible.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Navigating Japan Safely: Key Traffic Rules for SOFA Drivers

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes

A primary rule throughout Japan dictates all vehicles (motorized or pedaled) remain to the far-left side of the roadway where road conditions permit. Vehicles may partially cross or fully cross over multiple lanes to reach the far-right side of the roadway under the following circumstances:

- 1) When traveling on multi-lane roadways.
- 2) Whenever the width of the left half of the road is insufficient for a vehicle to proceed.
- 3) Whenever a vehicle is unable to proceed on the left side of the road due to road damage, road construction work, or other impediments.
- 4) Whenever attempting to pass another vehicle.
- 5) When merging across multi-lane roadways in order to make a right-hand turn.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes

Vehicle may pass other vehicles under the conditions prescribed above when the center of the road is marked by a solid or broken WHITE line. The following road markings prohibit passing.

Solid yellow centerline = No passing from either lane.

Double yellow centerline = No passing from either lane.

Solid yellow centerline = No passing from the lane nearest the solid yellow line.

CAUTION: WHEN OPERATING A VEHICLE AT NIGHT DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER, LANE SEPARATION LINES TEND TO “FADE” DUE TO THE TYPE OF PAINT USED ON JAPANESE ROADWAYS.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes

Whenever a sidewalk is separated from the roadway, vehicles must travel on the roadway. However, a vehicle may cross the sidewalk when this is the only way to enter or exit a business, private residence, or similar location. Pedestrians on sidewalks and crosswalks have the right of way at all times.

Vehicles **MUST NOT** be driven into safety zones.

Lanes designated for specific types of vehicles (bus lanes for example), are required to travel in the specific lanes designated for that type of vehicle.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes

Bus exclusive lanes are for buses, taxicabs with passengers, and motorcycles exclusively during certain hours of the day. These times will be clearly marked on roadways. The only time POV's are allowed in the bus exclusive lane is to make a left turn. In this instance, you can move into the bus exclusive lane 100 feet (30 meters) prior to your turn, provided you do not interfere with a bus or taxi's right of way.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes

When a public bus is signaling to leave a bus stop, no vehicle shall impede or interfere with the bus unless doing so means abruptly changing speed or traffic lanes which could cause an accident in an adjacent traffic lane.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes

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The following requirements must be adhered to when meeting a bus (school bus, The Green Line) on installation:

- When the bus stops, do NOT proceed. All vehicles, in both directions must stop immediately until the bus moves or the bus driver signals the vehicles to proceed.
- Pay close attention to pedestrians (children) disembarking from a bus to ensure they do not attempt to cross the street once the bus leaves the stop.

NOTE: Between the hours of 0730-0900 and 1730-1900 on HWY 58, the far-left lane is strictly for buses, motorcycles, and designated vehicles only.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes Common Rules of The Road

Motorcycles are restricted to the far-left side of the roadway on Highway 58 from Naha Port to Kadena Circle as well as roads 329 except within 100 feet (30 meters) of making a right turn.

Vehicles will not enter any area of the roadway marked or blocked to impede motorized vehicle traffic.

Vehicles must come to a complete stop at all stop lines, pedestrian crosswalks (when occupied), or at all uncontrolled intersections where stopping is required by law.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Traffic Lanes Common Rules of The Road

When three or more adjoining lanes in the same direction of travel occur, the far-right lane is considered the passing lane.

No vehicle may change its direction of travel without sufficiently signaling the intention to do so regardless of whether a turning lane is provided or not.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

COMMON TRAFFIC RULES FOR MOTOR VEHICLES ON NATIONAL EXPRESSWAY AND EXCLUSIVE ROADWAYS

Motor Vehicles entering the primary lane of travel on an Expressway must use the speed–acceleration lane to enter.

Motor vehicles intending to exit an Expressway must travel in the lane nearest the exit in the speed-deceleration lane if provided.

Motor vehicles attempting to merge into a primary lane of travel shall not obstruct the passage of vehicles already traveling in the primary lane of travel.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

COMMON TRAFFIC RULES FOR MOTOR VEHICLES ON NATIONAL EXPRESSWAY AND EXCLUSIVE ROADWAYS

It is the vehicle operator's responsibility to ensure a vehicle is mechanically sound, properly serviced, and cargo secured prior to traveling on an Expressway or Vehicle Exclusive Roadway. Violation of this requirement, either through negligent breakdown or cargo loss, may result in monetary fines and/or penal action (confinement).

Should the need arise to stop a vehicle due to malfunction or breakdown, the vehicle must be moved completely off the Expressway and warning devices (flares/safety triangles) posted to clearly indicate the vehicle is stopped for emergency maintenance reasons.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

COMMON TRAFFIC RULES FOR MOTOR VEHICLES ON NATIONAL EXPRESSWAY AND EXCLUSIVE ROADWAYS

Vehicles stopped on Expressways at night are required to display parking lights and/or emergency flashers and road flares as needed. It is recommended flashers be used any time a vehicle is stopped along a roadway.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW SPEED LIMITS

- Posted speed limits are significantly lower than most European and U.S. drivers are accustomed to. The congested-narrow roadways throughout Japan dictate that reduced speed limits must be observed to ensure public safety. Speed limit signs are depicted in kilometers per hour (km/h).





JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW SPEED LIMITS

Other than Expressways, the maximum speed limit for motorized vehicles operating off U.S. Installations is as follows:

- The maximum speed is 80 km/h for all trucks less than 5 tons, and all passenger vehicles (including buses and motorcycles with 125 cc+ engine displacement)
- The maximum speed is 60 km/h for trucks over 5 tons, all special vehicles (cement trucks, wreckers), and motorcycles under 125cc.
- The maximum speed is 30 km/h for any 2-wheeled vehicle under 50cc.

SPEED LIMITS

When traveling on Expressways and Exclusive Use Roadways, vehicles will not operate lower than the posted minimum speed limit unless it is unsafe to do so due to hazardous weather/road conditions.

When following vehicles, Japanese law requires drivers to maintain adequate distance to prevent colliding with the vehicle being followed in the event the vehicle makes an abrupt stop or turn. Drivers should avoid making last minute stops or turns.

SPEED LIMITS

- A general safety measure is to apply the 3-4 second rule when driving conditions permit. To calculate the 3-4 second rule, pick a stationary object along the traveled roadway. Once the vehicle in front of you crosses that point, begin counting. You should reach that object within 3-4 seconds. Note that in highly congested traffic areas it will be difficult to apply this rule so drivers must remain vigilant. Additionally, motorcycles require more of a following distance due to a shorter stopping distance.

SPEED LIMITS

Overtaking and Passing

“Passing” means going around a slower vehicle to the right on a two-way roadway. “Overtaking” refers to one vehicle moving past a slower vehicle on a one-way or multi-lane roadway.

Overtaking and passing violations account for a high percentage of motor vehicle mishaps in Japan due to the limited availability of dedicated passing lanes on standard roadways. Use caution when passing slower vehicles.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW SPEED LIMITS Overtaking and Passing

Vehicles attempting to pass another vehicle must typically pass to the right of the vehicle being overtaken. Certain conditions permit passing on the left; multi-lane roadways for example or when a vehicle stops in front of you or slows its speed to make a turn. Additional passing restrictions include:

Passing a vehicle if it indicates or appears to be passing another vehicle (dual passing).

Not passing if the vehicle ahead is proceeding parallel with or same speed as another vehicle (side by side).

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW SPEED LIMITS Overtaking and Passing

Drivers shall not zigzag (cut) between lanes of traffic that are proceeding slowly or when traffic has stopped. The restriction not only applies to intersections, but any location along the roadway where traffic is proceeding at a slow pace.

Passing is prohibited within 30 meters of a crosswalk or intersection, on blind curves, near the top of upgrades or on steep downgrades, inside tunnels (unless multi-lane roadway), and in designated “No Passing Lanes” as marked by a posted traffic sign.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

SPEED LIMITS

Overtaking and Passing

“No Parking Zones” and/or “No Stopping Zones” are designated by posted traffic signs as depicted in Appendix C. Figure 8 depicts a Safety Zone designation – these can be found in front of fire departments, police stations, hospitals, or areas entering mainstream traffic.

Drivers are permitted to stop at posted areas along the roadway under the following circumstances:

When executing a temporary stop to clear the lane of travel for emergency vehicles, as directed by police officer, or to avert danger.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

SPEED LIMITS

Overtaking and Passing

Drivers are not permitted to stop and park along roadway under the following circumstances:

- Within 5 meters or less of fire station, fire hydrant, or fire station truck entrance/exit road.
- Within 1 meter or less of a fire alarm.
- Temporary stops at designated intersections or crosswalks as required by law.

When parking meters are installed, drivers are required to activate the meter unless otherwise posted. If the time limits are exceeded, vehicles may be towed. Recovering a vehicle after it has been towed can be costly and time consuming.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

SPEED LIMITS

Overtaking and Passing

Parking a vehicle in any of the following locations is considered a violation of Japanese law unless permission is granted beforehand by a local police box having jurisdiction over the proposed parking location:

- Within 3 meters or less of a motor vehicle entrance/exit that provides access to main roadway (example: McDonald's entry/exit on Highway 58 across from Camp Lester).
- Within 1 meter or less of a fire alarm.
- Within 5 meters or less of a roadway construction project.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

SPEED LIMITS

Overtaking and Passing

Many roadways within U.S. Installations are designated as fire lanes. Be aware of painted curbs (red/yellow) as these designate either no parking or fire lanes.

Parking on grass or bare terrain on U.S. Installations is prohibited unless where otherwise posted.

No vehicle will park in any location where there is less than 0.5 meters of clear-space between the vehicle and the roadway. This does not apply for temporary stops to load or unload cargo or people, when the driver leaves the vehicle temporarily, or to provide emergency response to an ill or injured person.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

SPEED LIMITS

Overtaking and Passing

Abrupt vehicle stops are to be avoided unless required to avoid an accident.

When a vehicle is stopped to load or discharge people or cargo, it must be stopped as close as possible to the left edge of the roadway and in such manner the vehicle does not impede traffic.

On a one-way street, and if so, designated by a posted traffic sign, vehicles parked along the right side of the roadway.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

SPEED LIMITS

Overtaking and Passing

Designated parking spots may have police-imposed time limits to prevent continuous parking. Vehicle operators need to verify time limits if parking for an extended time period.

A police officer may order a vehicle to be moved or parked in a different manner so as not to obstruct the flow of traffic. When the vehicle operator is not available, police may have the vehicle moved up to 50 meters from where it was originally parked to help prevent a hazardous condition. If moving the vehicle 50 meters does not solve the problem, the vehicle may be impounded. The vehicle operator assumes all costs associated with moving or impounding the vehicle.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

SPEED LIMITS

Roadway Intersections

Vehicle right-of-way at uncontrolled intersections is observed as follows:

1. Vehicles traveling on priority road have the right-of-way
2. A vehicle approaching an intersection from the left has the right-of-way over a vehicle approaching the intersection from the right.

Any roadway with a centerline or traffic lane that crosses through an intersection is considered the priority road and vehicles traveling on this road have the right of way.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW SPEED LIMITS Roadway Intersections

Drivers entering or traveling through an intersection are required to pay attention to other vehicles in the intersection as well as pedestrians that may be in crosswalks close in proximity to the intersection.

Vehicles shall not enter an intersection even if a traffic signal is green if doing so will block cross traffic due to stalled rush-hour traffic.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Roadway Intersections

Vehicles shall not enter crosswalks, railroad crossings, or any other portion of the road that may impede vehicle or pedestrian cross traffic due to stalled rush-hour traffic.

Left turns on a red traffic light after a complete stop are prohibited off military installations unless otherwise permitted by a traffic control device (green signal or a white sign with blue arrow).



Vehicle Signaling

When making a lane change or turning any direction, vehicle operators are required to use either the vehicle's turn signal or a hand signal at least 30 meters prior to an intended turn or lane change. Drivers should ensure vehicle signals are turned off after the lane change or turn has been made.



JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW
SPEED LIMITS

Use of Vehicle Horn

It is not acceptable to sound a vehicles horn unless where required by law or to avert a hazard.



Headlight Use During Inclement Weather

Japanese traffic law does not require the use of headlights during periods of reduced visibility from inclement weather. However, headlight use is mandatory aboard all U.S. Installations and highly encouraged during reduced visibility.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

Vehicle Maintenance Requirements

Under Japanese traffic law, police officers have the right to stop a vehicle when the vehicle does not appear to be mechanically sound or safe to be on the road. Police officers may also conduct an on the-spot vehicle inspection and provide the vehicle operator with an itemized maintenance list. Police officers may also affix a sticker to the vehicle, clearly visible to all, denoting that the vehicle is in need of maintenance. The sticker can only be removed by a police officer after all discrepancies to the vehicle have been repaired and certified.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW Vehicle Maintenance Requirements

SOFA licensed drivers should note that vehicles must be inspected every two years for a Japanese Compulsory Insurance (JCI). Vehicles passing JCI must display an up-to-date sticker in their vehicle's windshield. Vehicles that do not pass this inspection, or vehicles with expired stickers are not allowed to be driven. Contact the Joint Vehicle Registration Office on Camp Foster for further information at 645-7481



DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Earned Responsibility, Ensuring Safety on Every Road

DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Implied Consent

Any person subject to this privilege shall be deemed to have consented to evidentiary tests of their blood, breath and/or urine to determine the blood alcohol or drug content (BAC). This consent applies when lawfully stopped, detained, apprehended, or cited for any driving offense committed while operating or in physical control of a motor vehicle in Japan, whether on or off a military installation. If a licensed driver is suspected of Driving under the Influence (DUI) of drugs or alcohol and refuses at any time to give a sample of their blood, breath, or urine, will be automatically considered as a refusal. Any person deemed deceased, unconscious, or otherwise in a condition rendering them incapable of refusal, shall be deemed not to have withdrawn their consent and such tests may be administered whether or not such person has been told that their failure to submit or to complete the test will result in revocation of their driving privileges.



Suspension or Revocation of Driving Privileges

The MCB Traffic Court magistrate will adjudicate all traffic cases and will suspend/revoke driving privileges as deemed appropriate by traffic court requirements.

Commanding Officers may also revoke service member driving privileges by submitting a formal letter to the Director of the Installation Safety Office requesting suspension of service member's license along with the physical copy of the SOFA license.

DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Restrictions on Use and Operation of Motor Vehicles

Authorized drivers will not rent, lend, or permit the use or operation of their POVs by persons other than those who possess a valid operator's permit (USFJ Form 4EJ), except for the temporary convenience of the owner or his or her family, such as when the vehicle is any of the following conditions:

- Undergoing maintenance or repair.
- Being shipped into or out of Japan.
- Stored in a parking lot or garage.
- Placed in temporary storage pending authorized disposition to resident of Japan.
- Undergoing inspection and processing at a GOJ Land & Transportation Office (LTO)
- Being driven by a properly licensed or authorized individual while the owner/operator is incapable of driving (e.g., physically incapacitated, too tired, or consumed any amount of alcohol).

DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Daiko Taxi Service

Daiko Taxi Service allows a SOFA member who is incapable of driving his/her vehicle (e.g., physically incapacitated, too tired, or consumed alcohol) to employ a commercial driving service to provide an additional driver for the purpose of returning an owner and POV to the owner's residence.

Regulations require the SOFA member to ride in his/her own vehicle as a passenger.

The Daiko licensed operators providing this service shall operate the motor vehicle in accordance with the established provisions for the motor vehicle operation aboard Marine Corps Installations as well as all applicable Japanese traffic laws.





DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Rented or Borrowed Motor Vehicle

Personnel will not operate a rented or borrowed motor vehicle, including any Japanese-owned motor vehicle, unless the following requirements are met:

- Operators must have a valid USFJ Form 4EJ for the type of motor vehicle operated.
- The owner is unavailable (e.g., deployed, TAD, leave, etc.), operators have the owner's written permission in their immediate possession while operating the motor vehicle.
- The vehicle is covered with appropriate insurance.

DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Required Documents

All personnel operating a motor vehicle in Japan must produce, upon request from military or Japanese law enforcement officials, the following:

Proof of vehicle ownership or registration as required by issuing authority.

A valid USFJ Form 4EJ operator's permit supported by an official DoD Identification Card or passport with stamp

Proof of JCI and property damage liability insurance.



DRIVING PRIVILEGES Required Documents

Per USFJ INST 31-205, Chap 2, SOFA Status/Permanent Party Members are not authorized to operate SOFA plated vehicles with an International Driver's permit (IDP)





DRIVING PRIVILEGES

Required Documents

Driving without a valid driver's license, aiding and abetting another to drive without a valid driver's license, improper acquisition of a driver's license and knowingly loaning a vehicle to someone who does not possess a valid driver's license can result in a fine and or punishment of up to 3 years confinement and no more than 500,000 yen.

Anyone who gets in a vehicle knowing the driver does not possess a valid driver's license can receive a fine/ punishment of 500,000 yen or up to 3 years confinement.

An aerial photograph of a car accident on a Japanese street. Two cars, a silver hatchback and a pink sedan, are involved in a collision on a zebra crossing. A woman in a white coat stands between the cars, and a man in a dark suit stands to the right, looking at a small object in his hands. The background shows the zebra crossing stripes and some Japanese road markings.

ACCIDENTS

Accident Protocol: Essential Steps for SOFA Drivers in Japan

ACCIDENTS

Reporting Requirements

Persons involved in a motor vehicle accident shall immediately report the occurrence to the nearest military law enforcement agency; if off-base, to the Japanese police by expeditious means.

Whenever the driver of a vehicle fails to or is physically incapable of reporting an accident and occupant in the vehicle at the time of the accident is capable of doing so, the occupant shall report the accident.

ACCIDENTS

Reporting Requirements

The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident resulting in injury to, or the death of, any person, or property damage shall immediately stop their vehicle at the scene of such accident (or as close thereto as possible) and remain at the scene until military police arrive.

The driver of any vehicle involved in an accident shall give his/her name, address, vehicle registration number, name of insurer, insurance policy number, insurance expiration, and upon request show his/her permit to any person injured in the accident or to the driver, occupant, or person attending any vehicle involved in such accident. The same information shall be provided to any law enforcement personnel at the scene of the accident or later investigation.

ACCIDENTS

Reporting Requirements

Duty of witness to Remain at Accident Scene

Witnesses to an accident shall not depart the scene until their identity has been furnished to law enforcement.

Witnesses to an accident shall give any assistance needed when requested by law enforcement.

For all off-base accidents, military police will respond to the scene upon notification. In such accidents, military police will assist Japanese police and the parties involved in exchanging information and instruct SOFA personnel to report to their insurance company.

ACCIDENTS

Reporting Requirements

Solatium Payments and Condolence Procedures: Where an incident results in serious injury or death to a Japanese national, you should make a solatium payment of up to 50,000 yen for serious injuries or 100,000 yen for fatalities. Under certain circumstances, your service commander may make such payments if you are financially unable to do so. Japanese custom dictates that a condolence visit be made to the injured party or to the surviving family and that appropriate fruit, candy or floral gifts be presented.





RULES OF THE ROAD

Alcohol Standards Driving Under the Influence/Driving While Intoxicated

No person may operate or be in physical control of any motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants, including beverages, drugs, or any combination.

If a person's Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is determined to be a level of .03 to .079 percent by weight of alcohol in the person's blood, the person shall be considered DUI.

If a person's BAC is determined to be .08 percent or more by weight of alcohol in the person's blood, or if tests reflect the presence of illegal drugs, the person shall be determined to be "Driving While Intoxicated" (DWI).

RULES OF THE ROAD

Alcohol Standards Driving Under the Influence/Driving While Intoxicated

When a person submits to a blood test at the request of law enforcement personnel under the provisions of Implied Consent, only a physician, nurse, or other qualified person may withdraw blood for the purpose of determining the alcohol or drug content herein. This limitation shall not apply to collecting breath or urine specimens.

If a person refuses to submit to a chemical test, evidence of refusal shall be admissible in any prosecution or proceeding arising out of acts alleged to have been committed while the person was driving, operating, or in physical control of a motor vehicle.





RULES OF THE ROAD

Alcohol Standards Japanese Standard

Japanese police determine the degree of intoxication by use of the Kitagawa Balloon Test which measures milligrams of alcohol per liter of expired breath. When reading of 0.15 mg/l (equivalent of .03% BAC) of expired breath is obtained, it shall be presumed for the purposes of prosecution in Japanese courts that the person was under the influence of alcohol.

Open Containers of Alcoholic Beverages. Operators and passengers of motor vehicles are prohibited from having open containers of alcoholic beverages in their possession.

RULES OF THE ROAD

General Provisions and Restrictions

Obedience to Police Officers and Other Authorities. All persons shall comply with any lawful order or direction of any police officer, fireman, or uniformed crossing guards to direct, control, or regulate traffic.



RULES OF THE ROAD

General Provisions and Restrictions

Drivers to Exercise Due Care. Every driver shall exercise due care to avoid colliding with any pedestrian or any person operating a vehicle. Drivers shall give an audible signal when necessary and shall exercise proper precautions upon observing any child, pedestrian, or any obviously confused, incapacitated, or intoxicated person.



RULES OF THE ROAD

General Provisions and Restrictions

Unattended Motor Vehicle. No person driving or in charge of a motor vehicle shall permit it to remain unattended without first stopping the engine, removing the key from the ignition, effectively setting the brake, and when upon any grade, turning the wheels to the curb or side of the highway.



RULES OF THE ROAD General Provisions and Restrictions

Unattended Children. Children nine years of age or younger will not be left unattended in a vehicle at any time.



RULES OF THE ROAD General Provisions and Restrictions

Limitations on Reverse Direction. The driver of a vehicle shall not:

- Drive in reverse direction unless such movement can be made safely and without interfering with other traffic;
- Drive in reverse direction upon any shoulder or roadway of any controlled access highway.

RULES OF THE ROAD

General Provisions and Restrictions

Operation of Vehicles upon Approach of an Emergency Vehicle.

Upon approach of an emergency vehicle making use of audible and/or visual signals, vehicle drivers shall yield the right of way, drive parallel to and as close as possible to the closest edge or curb of the roadway, and immediately stop unless doing so would be unsafe. Drivers shall stop clear of any intersection and remain in such position until the emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by law enforcement personnel.

RULES OF THE ROAD

General Provisions and Restrictions

Following Too Closely

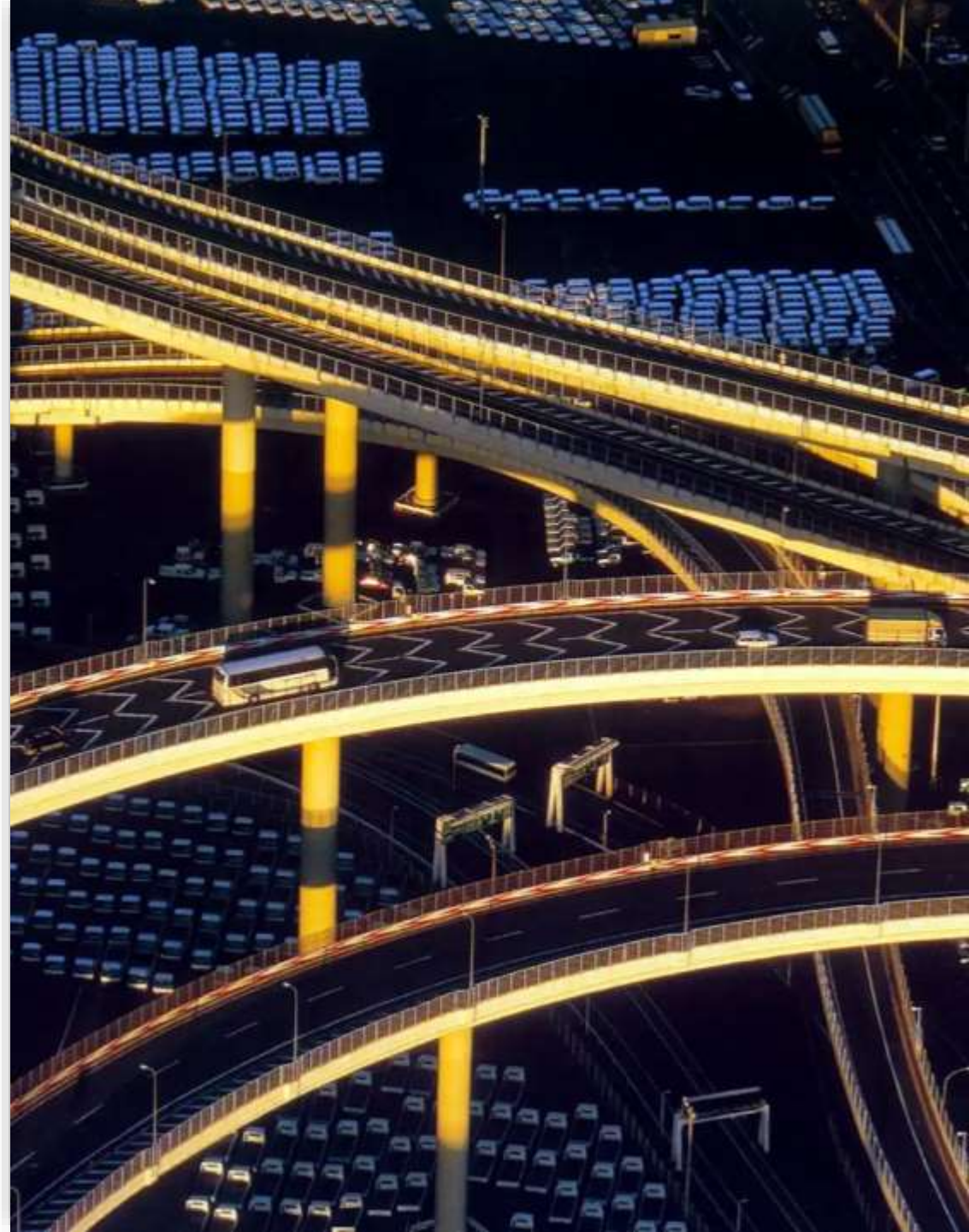
The driver of a motor vehicle shall not follow another vehicle more closely than is reasonable, having due regard for the speed of such vehicles, traffic congestion, and condition of the highway.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Lane Usage

One-Way Roadways and Rotary Traffic Islands.
Upon roadway designated for one-way traffic by an official traffic control device:

- A vehicle shall be driven only in the designated direction.
- When no road markings exist to indicate a separation of two or more lanes of travel, then only one lane shall be presumed to exist, and passing is prohibited.
- Driver shall obey the directions of official traffic control devices installed to prohibit the changing of lanes or sections of roadway.



RULES OF THE ROAD

Lane Usage

Driving on Divided Highways.
When a highway is divided into two or more roadways by an intervening space, physical barrier, or indicated section constructed to impede vehicular traffic; vehicles shall be driven only upon the left-hand roadway unless directed or permitted to use another roadway by traffic control devices or law enforcement personnel.



RULES OF THE ROAD

Operating Motorcycles on Roadways

All motorcycles are entitled to full use of a lane.

The operator of a motorcycle shall not overtake and pass in any lane currently occupied by another vehicle. Driving on the shoulder of the roadway in order to overtake a vehicle is prohibited; this specifically prohibits “white-lining.”

No person shall operate a motorcycle between lanes of traffic or between adjacent lines or rows of vehicles.

Motorcycles shall not be operated more than one abreast in a single lane.



RULES OF THE ROAD

Equipment for Motorcycle Riders and Passengers.

All SOFA personnel operating or riding a motorcycle on or off-base shall wear the appropriate PPE consisting of:

- A properly fastened (under the chin) protective helmet (DoT SNELL Approved).
- Impact or shatter resistant goggles or full-face shield attached to the helmet. A windshield, eyeglasses, sunglasses or fairing alone is not considered to be proper eye protection. Devices used at night will not be tinted.
- Clothing must cover the upper torso and legs; “T” shirts and shorts are prohibited.
- Leather boots that cover the ankles; sneakers, “tennis” shoes, or other athletic-type footwear are prohibited.
- Full fingered gloves.



RULES OF THE ROAD

Pedestrians

No vehicle shall overtake or pass any other vehicle stopped at a marked crosswalk or at any other location to permit a pedestrian to cross the roadway.



RULES OF THE ROAD

Cell Phones, Headphones, Listening Devices

Operating a vehicle and using a cell phone is strictly prohibited unless a hands-free device is employed. (i.e. Bluetooth earpiece, vehicle Bluetooth connectivity).

When the need to use a cell phone arises, the vehicle operator must completely pull over to the left side of the roadway and park the vehicle. It is preferred to park the vehicle in a parking area, but in the event of an emergency, a vehicle may park as close to the left curbside as possible and into or out of curve. Hazard flashing lights must be administered as well.

Wearing portable headphones, earphones, or other listening devices while operating a vehicle is strictly prohibited.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Illegal Parking Sticker

An illegal parking sticker may be affixed to an illegally parked vehicle. The user of the illegally parked vehicle who has received the parking sticker may be ordered to pay a fine for a parking violation.

Do not damage or tear the affixed illegal parking sticker until the fine has been paid. The vehicle operator must immediately go to the nearest Bank of Japan or post office to pay the fine. Any delay in paying the fine may cause additional fines to be assessed or driving privileges suspended.

CHAPTER 3: RULES OF THE ROAD (CONT.)

8. DRIVER'S DECALS

The following symbols must be affixed to a vehicle as deemed by the appropriate licensing authority:

New Driver



This symbol identifies a driver as being a new driver having one year or less of experience.

These symbols identify a driver over the age of 70 years.

ELDERLY DRIVER



HEARING IMPAIRED



This symbol identifies a driver as being hearing impaired. This driver must install an oversized rearview mirror to reduce blind spots.

This symbol identifies a driver or passenger who is handicapped.


























HANDICAPPED



NOTE: In order to qualify for a Beginner or New Driver sticker SOFA members must not, at any point, have had another driver license issued to them prior to being issued a SOFA license (i.e. U.S. driver's license or approved country). Otherwise, SOFA members are not eligible for the sticker.

9. SEAT BELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

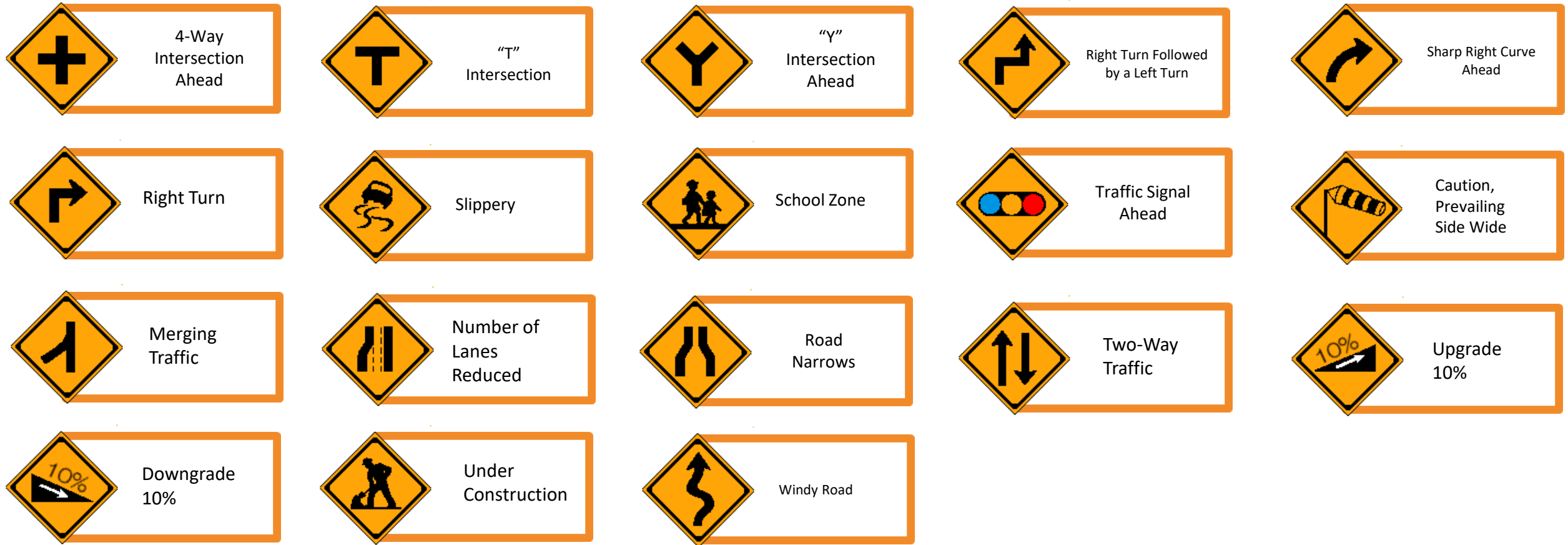
- Seat Belts are mandatory for all personnel inside a vehicle when the vehicle is operational; on and off base.
- Child seats are mandatory for a child under six years of age according to Japanese Traffic Law.

 <p>Closed to vehicles and Pedestrians</p>	 <p>Closed to all Vehicles</p>	 <p>Do not enter</p>	 <p>Road Closed for all Vehicles Except for Motorcycles</p>	 <p>Road Closed for Large Sized Trucks and Special Duty Vehicles</p>
 <p>Road Closed for Bicycles</p>	 <p>Road Closed to Two Wheeled Vehicles</p>	 <p>Road Closed for Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles</p>	 <p>Road Closed for Large Sized Passenger Vehicles</p>	 <p>Left Turn Only</p>
 <p>Left or Through Traffic Only</p>	 <p>Right & Left Turns Only</p>	 <p>Proceed Only in Designated Direction</p>	 <p>Proceed on the Left</p>	 <p>Through Traffic Only</p>
 <p>No Passing</p>	 <p>No "U" Turn</p>	 <p>No Right Turn</p>	 <p>No Parking or Stopping (Restriction applies from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.)</p>	 <p>No Parking (Restriction applies from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.)</p>
 <p>Exclusive Road for Bicyclist</p>	 <p>Exclusive Road for Bicyclist & Pedestrians</p>	 <p>Width Limit (2.2 meters)</p>	 <p>Parking Limited to 60 minutes Only (Restriction applies from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.)</p>	 <p>Exclusive Road for Pedestrians</p>

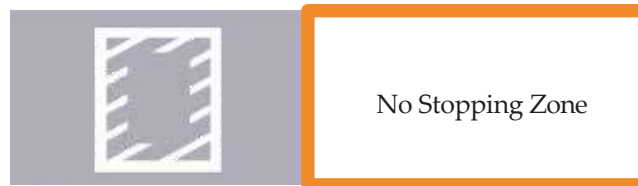
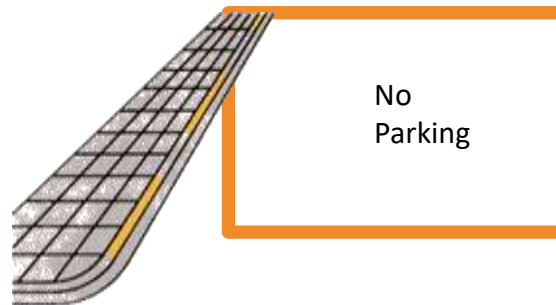
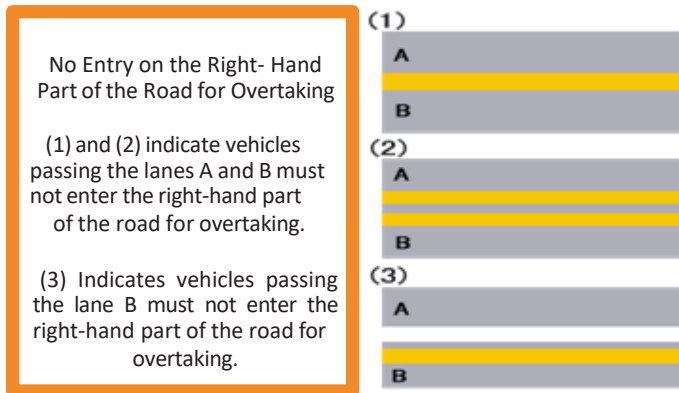
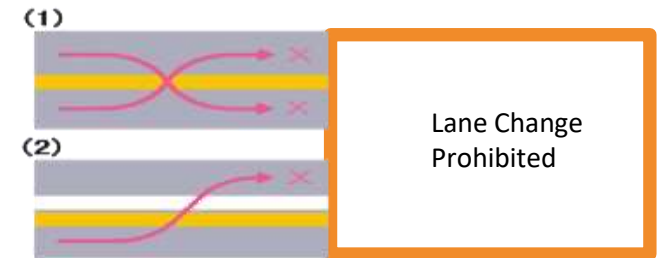
JAPANESE TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD MARKING

	Weight Limit (5.5 tons)		Height Limit (3.3 meters)		Motor Vehicles Only		Maximum Speed Limit		Minimum Speed Limit
	Bus Exclusive Lane		Sound Horn		Bus Preferred Lane		Cross Walk (a)		Cross Walk (b)
	Direction Designated Lane		Two-Step Right Turn for Mopeds		Safety Zone		Primary Road		No Pedestrian Crossing
	Direction Designated Lane		Direction Designated Lane		Direction (refers to the route, facility or place indicated by the sign)		Proceed Slowly		Stop
	Stop Before the Stop Line		One Way		Left Turn Permitted on Red		Proceed Slowly Main Road Has Right of Way		Stop Main Road Has Right of Way

JAPANESE TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD MARKING

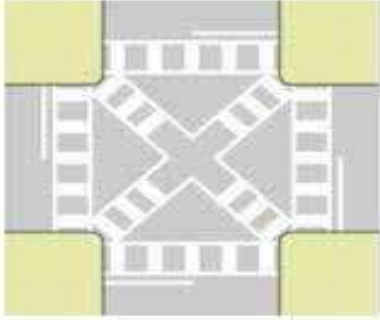


JAPANESE TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD MARKING



JAPANESE TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD MARKING

MULTIPLE CROSSWALKS



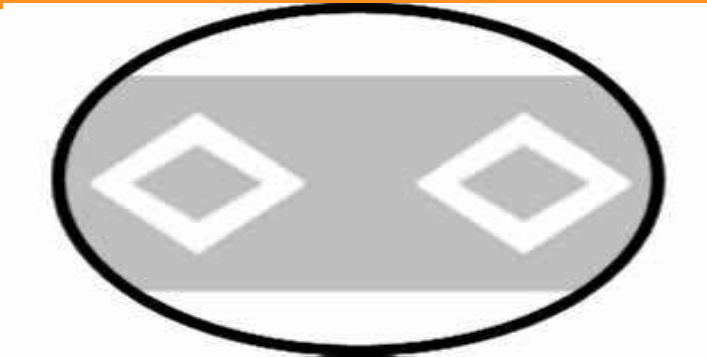
Intersections with a high volume of pedestrian traffic may look similar to this.

MULTIPLE CROSSWALKS



Safety zones are no stopping zones generally located in front of fire stations, hospitals, and police stations.

MULTIPLE CROSSWALKS



This symbol serves as an indicator that you are approaching a crosswalk.

Driving in Okinawa

Embrace the Journey, Respect the Road

Driving in Okinawa

Essential Tips for Safe Travel

Exploring Okinawa Behind the Wheel

Distinctive Driving Culture: Okinawa's roads offer a unique experience, combining breathtaking coastal views, lush landscapes, and bustling city streets. Driving here requires adapting to the island's slower, more relaxed pace.

Local Road Rules: In Japan, driving is on the left side of the road. The left lane is for slower traffic, while the right lane allows faster movement, though speed differences are minor.

Speed Limits and Road Structure: Speed limits are measured in kilometers per hour (km/h) and rarely exceed 60 km/h (37 mph), except on the Okinawa Expressway where the limit is 80 km/h. Roads are generally narrower and traffic can be dense, particularly in urban areas.

Driving in Okinawa

Understanding Traffic and Transportation Dynamics

Adapting to Local Traffic Patterns

Heavy Congestion: With no subway or extensive rail system, most people rely on cars, making traffic congestion common, particularly around military bases and urban centers.

Relaxed Driving Pace: Okinawa's slower lifestyle is reflected in driving habits. While U.S. roads might see more urgency, Okinawan drivers generally travel at a leisurely pace. Adopting a relaxed mindset can make driving less stressful and help you blend in with local drivers.

Cultural Courtesy: Courtesy and patience are core values in Okinawa. Respecting other drivers and practicing calm, polite driving will help you navigate more smoothly and even earn respect from locals.

Driving in Okinawa

Mastering Traffic Lights and Navigating Intersections

Navigating Okinawa's Intersections and Road Conditions

Traffic Light Timing: Prepare for longer wait times at traffic lights, as cycles are often extended. This may seem unusual, but it allows for smoother traffic flow in busy areas.

Intersection Caution: Be cautious when your light turns green. Some drivers may still be clearing the intersection, so verify it's clear before proceeding.

Limestone Roads and Weather: Many Okinawan roads are limestone-based, making them slippery in wet conditions. Rainy days require extra caution with speed and braking to avoid accidents.

Unmarked Intersections: Japan doesn't use four-way stops. At intersections without traffic lights, the main road has the right of way. Patience and caution are crucial, especially for drivers unfamiliar with this setup.

Driving in Okinawa

Navigating Parking and Common Violations

Parking in High-Demand Areas

Limited Parking Availability: Due to space constraints, parking spots can be scarce, especially near popular sites and military bases. Look for legal parking to avoid fines or penalties.

Airport Parking Tips: At Naha International Airport, use designated zones for quick drop-offs and garages for longer stays. Remember, airport parking is cash-based (yen only), so plan accordingly.

Handling Tickets: If you receive a parking ticket, pay it promptly at a local bank or post office within the 14-day grace period to avoid added penalties.

Driving in Okinawa

Local Merging Habits and High-Risk Intersections

Understanding Okinawa's Unique Merging and High-Risk Areas

Different Merging Etiquette: Unlike the U.S., some Okinawan drivers may come to a complete stop before merging. This habit, while cautious, can surprise drivers unfamiliar with it, so stay alert and ready to adapt.

High-Risk Intersections:

Isa Intersection (Highway 58): Near Camp Foster, this spot sees frequent rear-end collisions due to complex merging and traffic flow.

Michi-no-Eki Intersection (near Kadena Gate 3): Popular with tourists, this intersection is often crowded with tour buses and pedestrians, increasing accident risks.

Kokusai Street Intersection (near Kadena Gate 1): Known for high pedestrian and cyclist activity. Vigilance is key to navigating safely here.

Importance of Defensive Driving: Given Okinawa's narrow roads, wet conditions, and busy intersections, defensive driving is essential for safety, especially during the rainy season.

MCB Butler



INITIAL TESTING:

Foster : Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Courtney : Monday-Friday

0800 and 1000 (Check in starts 30 minutes prior)

RENEWALS, DUPLICATES, REINSTATEMENTS, RE-TESTING AND MISC. CUSTOMER SERVICE:

Foster : Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 1230-1600

Courtney : Monday-Friday 1230-1600

LOCATION:

CAMP FOSTER, BLDG. 5831 DSN 645-7219

CAMP COURTNEY, BLDG. 4319 DSN 622-6202

OFFICE CLOSURES:

Lunch – Monday-Friday 1115-1230

Foster : Closed Every Wednesday

Federal Holidays

KADENA AIR BASE



