

## Daily Life

### Housing

#### Looking for an Apartment or House

If you cannot speak or read Japanese well, then bring a Japanese speaker along when searching for an apartment, preferably an impartial and trustworthy person who can explain the terms of housing contracts clearly as well as convey your thoughts and questions to real estate agents (fudōsan 不動産). Be aware that some real estate agencies will refuse to rent to foreigners, especially those who do not speak Japanese.

#### Things to Consider:

|  |   |                         |   |   |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|---|
| Price  | Flooring<br>(western or tatami mats)  | Privacy and noise level | Number of electrical outlets                        | Storage space   |
| Wifi   | Bathroom<br>(western or oriental)   | Exposure to sunlight    | Air-conditioner<br>Heater                           | Allowance for pets  |
| Access to transportation, shopping, banks, workplace, convenience stores, etc. | Apartment size<br>e.g. 2LDK includes 2 rooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, and bathroom | Natural ventilation     | Location for washing machine<br>(inside or outside) | Parking facilities<br>(a separate charge for parking is not uncommon) |

Sometimes the size is termed according to the number of straw tatami mats (jō 畳) that would cover the floor space. Standard size for a tatami mat is 90cm by 180cm (roughly three feet by six feet). Hence, a room of less than six mats is rather small. The average size of a Japanese room in an apartment is about six jō (6 畳).

Larger houses, office rental space, and land area are sometimes measured in tsubo (坪). One tsubo equals two jō (180cm by 180cm).

#### Furnishings and Amenities

In general, apartments are unfurnished. Only electrical outlets and bathroom facilities are supplied. Appliances such as gas ranges, refrigerators, and washing machines are usually the responsibility of the tenant. Central heating is a rarity, but some real estate agents lease air conditioners along with apartments. Rent for apartments with air conditioners is usually a little higher.

#### Renting

##### Deposit/Intent Money (Tetsukekin 手付け金)

Once you have found an apartment, you may pay an initial deposit in order to show your interest and hold the apartment in your name. If you decide to rent the apartment, the deposit money will go toward the first month's rent. However, if for some reason you decide not to enter the contract, this payment is non-refundable. Conversely, if the landlord were to back out of the agreement for some reason, you are entitled to a refund of twice the amount you paid.

#### Formalizing a Contract

Be sure to understand the contract completely. Important points to double-check include:

- Period the lease is in effect
- Amount of rent (yachin 家賃) and maintenance expenses (kyōekihi 共益費)
- Amount of deposit and how much will be returned when the lease expires.
- What utilities are included in the rent
- How much notice is required before moving out
- Most real estate agents may require a Japanese sponsor or "guarantor" (hoshōnin 保証人). This person will co-sign your lease, and is responsible if you don't pay your rent.
- A personal seal (inkan 印鑑) may also be necessary.



## Up-Front Costs (Shoki Hiyō 初期費用)

When you sign the contract, you will likely be charged a number of fees. These fees may add up to over ¥200,000. They include:

- First month's rent and maintenance fees
- Insurance (fire, theft, and earthquake insurance are the most common)
- Real estate agent's fee (usually equivalent to one month's rent)
- Deposit (shikikin 敷金) This will be used to clean and repair the apartment when you move out. A small portion may be returned to you. (Usually equivalent to 1-3 months' rent)
- Key money (礼金) This is a non-refundable fee to the landlord. (Usually equivalent to 1-3 months rent)

## Moving In

In Japan, it is common for a person to greet their neighbors once they have moved into a new property. Often Japanese people will take a small gift (omiyage お土産), but this is not really necessary if you do not wish to.

When moving in, don't forget to ask the landlord where and when the garbage is collected. Information about garbage collection is available from the Environmental Conservation Section on the 5th floor of City Hall.

Also, find out about your Neighborhood Association (jichikai 自治会). These groups can provide you with useful information about living in your area, and community centers offer classes in various fields from computers to tea ceremony.

## Living in a Japanese House

### Genkan 玄関

When you walk into a Japanese house you will immediately enter the genkan, an area that is on a slightly lower level than the rest of the house. Shoes are removed here, and people enter the house barefoot or wearing socks/slippers.

### Tatami 畳

Tatami are straw mats used as flooring in many Japanese homes. They consist of a thin straw sheet bound to a 4-5cm thick mat. These are usually laid on top of unfinished wooden boards. When a tenant leaves, the realtor will have a tatami shop come to put new straw sheets on the thick mats. This is called omotegae, and it costs about ¥4-6,000 per mat. If you have a 12 tatami apartment, this will cost you upwards of ¥60,000. This cost gets taken out of your deposit, and is the primary reason that you will see little of that money ever again.

Tatami mats are extremely easy to damage. If they get wet, mold will form, and they will have to be replaced. Placing heavy furniture on them may dent them.

To clean them, use a vacuum or a broom, but do not use any chemicals or cleaning agents.

### Mold (Kabi カビ)

If you do not take care to ventilate your house or apartment, mold WILL form in dark, moist places. De-moisturizing agents (kansōzai 乾燥剤) can be purchased at grocery stores and placed around the house where mold is likely to form. Clothing and books are particularly susceptible to mold. A mold remover (kabitori カビ取り) can be used for bathrooms. Even in the winter it is very important that you leave the windows open as often as possible in order to prevent mold from forming.

### Insects

Insecticides (sattchūzai 殺虫剤) are available in various forms at drug stores, supermarkets, and discount department stores. To get rid of tatami ticks (dani ダニ), try airing the mats or spraying the surface with insecticide. Next to getting rid of your tatami, the most effective way to eliminate these pests is to use the specially manufactured tick insecticide (dani taiji ダニ退治). Be careful not to leave food or pets indoors when you use these insecticides, and be sure to air out the room after using them.

Mosquitoes (ka 蚊) appear in large numbers during the summer. Various repellants can be used, including the incense-like (katori senkō 蚊取り線香) and a fumeless electric device called (denki katori 電気蚊取り). For hiking and other outdoor activities, personal insect repellant (mushi sasare yobōzai 虫刺され予防剤) might be a wise precaution. Once bitten, try applying a lotion (kayumi dome 痒み止め) to stop the itching.



## Drinking Water

You may notice that the water here tastes different from the water in your home country. However, Japan's water supply system is extremely well monitored and there is no danger in consuming water taken directly from a water supply outlet, such as a household tap or faucet.

Some people find that a sudden change in water can cause an upset stomach and that it helps to drink bottled water until one's body gets used to the difference. If problems persist, please consult a doctor.

Note that fluoride and other chemicals are not added to the water here. Absence of fluoride may cause teeth to decay faster, so one should pay particular attention to oral hygiene.

Water quality may deteriorate due to typhoons. You should either boil your water or buy bottled water when such reports are made. Water shortages may make it necessary to ration water, particularly during the summer months. Please do your best to conserve water.

## Utilities

Ask your real estate agency how to set up gas, electric, and water service to your apartment or house.

## Paying Bills

Living in Japan, you will likely have to pay rent (yachin 家賃), water (suidō 水道), electricity (denki 電気), gas (gasu ガス), and phone (denwa 電話) bills. You can pay most bills by bringing the invoice to a bank or convenience store and paying in cash, or by automatic bank payment (jidō kōza furikae 自動口座振替). Some service providers and landlords also send a bill collector door-to-door.

If you choose to pay in cash, most providers will send you a notice (shirase 知らせ) of the amount you owe, followed later by an invoice (seikyūsho 請求書). When you get the invoice, bring it to a convenience store or bank to pay.




If you want to use automatic payment, you must have a savings account. To set up automatic bill pay for water and rent, talk to your landlord or realtor. For electric and gas, bring an invoice, ID, and your personal seal to the bank where you have an account. Phone bills can be arranged at the time you apply for your line (or cell).

If there is not enough money in your account at the time of automatic payment, the company will usually send out a notice stating that it tried unsuccessfully to take money from your account, and that it will make a second attempt later. You may need to pay directly at the bank in cases of insufficient funds or overdue bills.





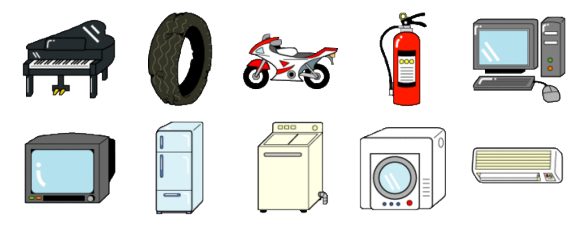
## Waste and Recycling

Responsible Organizations: **Environmental Conservation Section** (Kankyō Hozen-ka 環境保全課)  
 Urasoe City Hall, 5th Floor  
 Telephone: (098) 876-1234 (ext. 3212)

The city of Urasoe collects five types of garbage as described below. If you do not sort your garbage properly, it will not be collected. Please place your garbage outside for collection before 8:00am and make sure to tie the opening closed.

| <b>Combustible Garbage</b> (Moeru Gomi 燃えるごみ)                     |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Disposal Method</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combustible garbage must be placed in Urasoe's designated combustible garbage bag. These bags have orange writing on them and are sold at supermarkets and convenience stores.</li> <li>Please place your garbage outside for collection before 8:00am and make sure to tie the opening closed.</li> <li>Make sure nothing is sticking out of the bag.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Types of Waste</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plastic (toys, containers, recorders, VHS tapes, CD / DVD, etc.)</li> <li>Styrofoam Packaging</li> <li>Paper (thermal paper, pictures, carbon paper, waterproof processing paper, etc.)</li> <li>Cloth (clothing, towels, shoes, etc.)</li> <li>Rubber (boots, gloves, etc.)</li> <li>Plastic bags (register bags, etc.)</li> <li>Leather goods (satchels, shoes, bags, etc.)</li> </ul>    |
| <b>Cautions</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kitchen Waste (remove all fluids)</li> <li>Diapers (flush solid waste down the toilet)</li> <li>Futon / Pillows               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only "Medium" (中) and "Small" (小) size bags are acceptable. "Large" (大) bags will not be collected.</li> <li>Place in the designated bag and tie the top.</li> <li>Use multiple bags to make sure the contents do not stick out.</li> <li>Items that do not apply to the above will be categorized as Bulk Garbage.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>Non-combustible Garbage</b> (Moenai Gomi 燃えないごみ)               |  |
| <b>Disposal Method</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-combustible garbage must be placed in Urasoe's designated non-combustible garbage bag. These bags have blue writing on them and are sold at supermarkets and convenience stores.</li> <li>Please place your garbage outside for collection before 8:00am and make sure to tie the opening closed.</li> <li>Make sure nothing is sticking out of the bag. (Umbrellas are an exception)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Types of Waste</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Metals (pots, umbrellas, hangers, paint cans (excluding spray cans), etc.)</li> <li>Glass / Bottles (beauty product bottles, oil bottles, mirrors, light bulbs, glass cups, etc.)</li> <li>Pottery (tea bowls, plates, vases, clay pots, flowerpots, etc.)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Cautions</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small Electric Appliances (VCRs, radio cassette, fans, vacuum cleaners, rice cookers, toasters, etc.)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recyclable home appliances will not be collected.</li> <li>Refer to the "Garbage not collected by the City" section below.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Blades (wrap in item in newspaper and write "Dangerous" on top before placing in the designated bag.)</li> </ul> <p><b>WARNING</b><br/>           Electric appliances are categorized as non-combustible garbage. To avoid explosions, make sure to separate items that contain combustible gas.</p> |
| <b>Harmful / Dangerous Garbage</b> (Yūgai & Abunai Gomi 有害・危ないごみ) |  |
| <b>Disposal Method</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please place harmful and dangerous garbage into clear plastic bags under 45 liters in size.</li> <li>Please place your garbage outside for collection before 8:00am and make sure to tie the opening closed.</li> <li>Make sure nothing is sticking out of the bag. (Flourescent lamps are an exception.)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Types of Waste</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flourescent Lamps</li> <li>Dry-cell Batteries (rechargeable batteries will not be collected; use the retailer's collection box, etc.)</li> <li>Spray Cans (use all contents)</li> <li>Lighters (use all contents)</li> <li>Items Containing Mercury (e.g. thermometers)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Cautions</b>   | Please use all contents in spray cans and lighters to avoid explosions.  |



| Recyclable Garbage (Shigen Gomi 資源ごみ)                         |  |
|---|--|
| Disposal Method   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please place your garbage outside for collection before 8:00am and make sure to tie the opening closed.</li> <li>For <b>Containers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place all cans, bottles, and PET bottles into a basket.</li> <li>Remove the label and cap and separate into the appropriate garbage (can lids will be collected as Recyclable Garbage).</li> </ul> </li> <li>For <b>Yard Waste</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please place leaves and small sticks into clear plastic bags under 45 liters in size.</li> <li>Bundle branches with rope and place outside for collection (1 bundle = 10kg).</li> <li>Please call in advance of the collection day for branches that exceed 5cm in diameter.</li> <li>Up to 6 bags / bundles may be collected at one time.</li> </ul> </li> <li>For <b>Paper Waste</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bundle paper waste with rope according to type for collection (no bags necessary).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Types of Waste  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Containers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cans, bottles, PET bottles (metal caps / lids are Non-combustible Garbage)</li> </ul>  </li> <li><b>Yard Waste</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sheared leaves, sticks, branches, etc.</li> </ul>  </li> <li><b>Paper Waste</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cardboard Boxes</li> <li>Newspapers, Flyers</li> <li>Books, magazines, snack boxes, tissue boxes</li> <li>Paper Cartons (Rinse with water and open flat)</li> </ul>  </li> </ul>  |
| Cautions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For <b>Containers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can lids will be collected as Recyclable Garbage (As of May 2018)</li> </ul> </li> <li>For <b>Yard Waste</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processed wood products (plywood, timber, etc.) are unrecyclable and will be collected as Bulk Garbage)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| Bulk Garbage (Sodai Gomi 粗大ごみ)                                |  |
| Disposal Method   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please place your garbage outside for collection before 8:00am and make sure to tie the opening closed.</li> <li>Please call in advance of the collection day for all bulk garbage.</li> <li>Please attach a "bulk garbage sticker" to the items for collection (we will inform you of how many to attach during the reservation). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stickers are available at supermarkets, convenience stores, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| Types of Waste  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Furniture (drawers, chairs, desks, tables, sofas, beds, carpets, matting, etc.)</li> <li>Home Appliances (microwaves, gas stoves, etc.)</li> <li>Others (plants / trees, laundry poles, soil, bicycles, etc.)</li> <li>Items that stick out of their designated garbage bags</li> <li>Items that can fit in their designated bags, but may damage the collection truck (iron dumbbells, barbells, etc.)</li> </ul>   |
| Cautions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Futons (please see the notes for futons in the Combustible Garbage section)</li> <li>Large items and heavy items may need to be inspected before collection</li> </ul>  |
| Items that cannot be collected (Kaishū Dekinai Gomi 回収できないゴミ) |  |
| Examples  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pianos</li> <li>LP Gas Cylinders</li> <li>Tires</li> <li>Autobikes</li> <li>Rechargeable Batteries</li> <li>Water Tanks</li> <li>Fire Extinguishers</li> <li>Computers</li> <li>Recycleable Electronics (TVs, refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, dryers, air conditioners)</li> </ul>   |

## Establishing a Place to Discard Your Garbage (Cooperative Area)

Normally, garbage is collected from the front of each home, or from a common collection area established by the landlord. However, there are several roads too narrow for the garbage truck to enter, and therefore there is an established area where the neighborhood leaves its garbage for collection. If you live in such an area, your garbage will not be collected from outside your home. All garbage must be brought to the designated collection area. Please consult your neighbors and landlord for more information or to make arrangements for a designated area if you live in area where the streets are too narrow for cars to pass through.

## Garbage NOT Collected by the City

Washing machines, refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers, and televisions are all designated by law as recyclable household appliances. If you want to dispose of one of these items, please contact the maker to arrange for their disposal. If you are replacing an appliance, ask the store if they can dispose of the old appliance. If neither of these options is possible, you will have to find a private disposal company to dispose of the item. The Environmental Conservation Section can assist you with locating a disposal company. If an item is old but functional, consider donating it to charity or to a recycle shop.

The city also does not collect items such as pianos, LP gas canisters, fire extinguishers, tires, mopeds, batteries, and water tanks. For the disposal of these items please contact a private disposal company.

## Garbage Collection During Typhoons

Garbage collection will vary during typhoons depending on whether busses are running or not. It is dangerous to go outside during a typhoon, so please refrain from discarding your garbage until the next appropriate collection day. Collection will not take place if busses stop running by 8am. If busses resume running by 3pm, then garbage collection will take place at the same time busses resume running.

## Recycle Plaza

Responsible Organizations: **Recycle Plaza** (Risaikuru Puraza リサイクルプラザ)  
Address: 555-25 Jicchaku, Urasoe, Okinawa 901-2122  
Telephone: (098) 861-3196

Recycle Plaza is a facility maintained by Urasoe to promote the recycling and reuse of household items. They accept donations of used bicycles, furniture, clothing, dishes, and toys from anyone living in Urasoe. If you live in Urasoe, this is a way to get rid of used furniture without having to pay the bulk garbage fee. Donated items are then sold at low prices in the plaza's "recycle store."

## Banking

Both banks and post offices provide banking services. Deciding whether to open a regular savings account (futsū yokin 普通預金) at a bank or a postal savings account (yūbin chokin 郵便貯金) at the post office depends on the services you require. Since post office accounts can be used nationwide, they are convenient if you will need to withdraw or deposit money while traveling to other parts of Japan. The two largest banks in Okinawa, Ryūkyū Ginkō (琉球銀行) and Okinawa Ginkō (沖縄銀行), do not have many branches outside of Okinawa. However, traditional bank accounts are often required for direct deposit or direct bill pay. Opening both types of accounts may be a good idea depending on your needs.

## Opening a Bank Account (Kōza Kaisetsu 口座開設)

In general, foreigners who are residing in Japan for the short term (90 days or less) are unable to open a bank account. In addition, mid to long term foreign residents are only able to create an account if they have lived in Japan for over 6 months, or if they are currently employed.

There are various kinds of accounts available, but a general savings account (futsū yokin kōza 普通預金口座) is best for daily transactions and bill payments. When opening an account you will need your Residence Card. A personal seal (inkan 印鑑) might also be required, although some banks allow foreign residents to use their signature instead.

In order to open an account, you must fill out a new savings account application form and select a personal identification number (kādo anshōbangō カード暗証番号) for your cash card.

After opening an account, customers receive a bankbook (tsūchō 通帳). Cash cards are sent to the account holder's address approximately two weeks after the account is opened.



## Deposits (O-azuke ire お預入れ)

For deposits at the service window, fill out a deposit slip (nyūkinhyō 入金票) and present your bankbook or cash card.

To deposit money from an ATM:

- Insert your bankbook or card
- Enter your PIN
- Select the "deposit" button (お預け入れ or ご入金).
- Put your money in the slot. The machine will count the money.
- Select the "confirm" button (確認) if the amount is correct, or 訂正 to correct it.

## Withdrawals (O-hikidashi お引き出し)

For withdrawals at the service counter, a bankbook, an inkan, and a withdrawal slip (harai modoshi seikyūsho 払戻請求書) are necessary.

To withdraw money from an ATM:

- Insert your bankbook or card
- Enter your PIN
- Select the "withdrawal" button (お引き出し)
- Enter the amount of withdrawal, correcting if necessary (訂正).
- Confirm the amount (確認).
- You may be asked if want a receipt. Enter 不要 for no and 要 for yes.

## About Cash Machines (ATMs)

Bank and postal ATMs are generally in service during business hours Monday – Friday. Some locations may also have extended hours on evenings and weekends. However, these ATMs will charge a service fee (tesūryō 手数料) of around ¥100 if you use them outside of business hours. Withdrawal-only ATMs, often located in supermarkets and department stores, may be open longer hours but will also charge a service fee.

It is also good to withdraw money in advance of holidays, especially New Years and Golden Week. Banks and their ATMs will be closed, but you can still use ATMs at department stores and grocery stores.

You will be charged a fee when you use your bank's card in another bank's machine, transfer funds (furikae or furikomi), or use an ATM after hours.

Some ATM vocabulary:

|                     |                |       |
|---------------------|----------------|-------|
| Ten Thousand        | Man            | 万     |
| Thousand            | Sen            | 千     |
| Hundred             | Hyaku          | 百     |
| Withdrawal          | O-hikidashi    | お引き出し |
| Deposit             | O-azukeire     | お預け入れ |
| Show Balance        | Zandaka-shōkai | 残高照会  |
| Update Bankbook     | Tsūchō kinyū   | 通帳記入  |
| Transfer of Funds   | O-furikae      | お振替   |
| Direct Transfer     | O-furikomi     | お振込   |
| Confirmation Button | Kakunin        | 確認    |
| Correction Button   | Teisei         | 訂正    |
| Cancellation Button | Torikeshi      | 取り消し  |

## Bank Loans

It is difficult but possible to get a bank loan in Japan as a foreigner. You must be working in Japan, and you will need to bring documents such as your passport, Residence Card, and proof of employment (consult your bank to find out what is necessary). You must also find a guarantor (hoshōnin 保証人). The bank may ask to see a permanent residence permit (eijūkyokasho 永住許可書). Some banks offer loans to foreigners more readily than others, and the availability of loans may affect your choice of bank. Many Japanese have several bank accounts because some offer better loan arrangements than others.

## Credit Cards

You must bring your passport and Residence Card, and information about your workplace to your bank when applying. Owning a Japanese credit card will be useful if you decide to use a callback system for international phone calls. You may also want a Japanese credit card if you plan to shop online, particularly on Japanese sites. Another advantage of having a Japanese credit card is that you can use it to take out money from bank machines. Outside of postal ATMs, very few ATMs in Japan will allow you to withdraw money using a foreign credit card.

## Sending Money Overseas (Sōkin 送金)

### GoRemit (go レミット)

GoRemit is a fast, convenient, and inexpensive way to send funds electronically overseas. Remitters simply use any bank ATM or internet banking in Japan to transfer the funds domestically to the bank account designated by Shinsei Bank. GoRemit then completes the overseas remittance.

Funds received by 3:00 pm (by noon if yen funds) on a business day will be processed according to that day's exchange rate, and in many cases will take 1-3 days to reach the beneficiary account. Please note that local banking practices at the beneficiary end may cause delays in some cases.

The service fee is ¥2,000 and is not dependent on the amount you send. Yen-basis remittances are subject to an additional charge of 0.1% of the amount sent (minimum charge of ¥1,500). As with any international remittance, intermediary banks will deduct a fee. In addition, beneficiary banks in some countries may also levy a charge.

### Japan Post Bank (Yūcho Ginkō ゆうちょ銀行)

Japan Post is a well-known way to transfer money out of Japan, via its bank. However, it is worth noting there are only 233 branches in Japan that provide this service, so make sure there's one nearby. To use this service, you have two options:

- A paper money order (jūsho ate sōkin 住所あて送金). This means the funds (in your target currency) will be sent in an envelope to either a bank or address. This is neither fast nor secure.
- An electronic transfer (kōza ate sōkin 口座あて送金), in which case the money is transferred directly to an overseas bank account (in your target currency.) This can be done with cash or via your Japan Post Bank account, if you have one.

To do so costs 2500 yen in most cases. Sending money to a US bank account costs just 2000 yen, excluding receiving fees.

To transfer money from the post office, you'll need your Residence Card or passport and you will need to fill out the appropriate form (the forms have English on them). You can tell the staff which type of transfer you want to do.

After going through the process, if you plan to transfer money the same way to the same place more than once, you can ask for a special form (kokusai sōkin seikyūsho inji sābisu mōshikomisho 国際送金請求書印字サービス申込書) to pre-fill out the information and they can keep it on file for you.

### Bank Remittance Checks (Sōkin Kogitte 送金小切手)

Bank remittances vary from bank to bank. This method is safe but slow, and requires the cooperation of a friend or relative in the country you are sending the money to if you want to deposit the money in your own account. At the Japanese bank, yen or foreign currency is written up as a check, which you can mail to anyone you like. It may take 4-5 days for the bank to prepare the check. Whoever you send the money to can then cash the check at a bank you specify, and dispose of it as you instruct them to. On the Japanese side, you may be charged fees around ¥2,500-¥5,000. There may be further fees at the bank where the check is cashed.





## Postal Services

Responsible Organizations: **Urasoe Central Post Office**  
 Address: 3-3-1 Nakama, Urasoe 901-2199  
 Telephone: (098) 877-4405

Postal Service Information in English: (0570) 046-111  
 8am-10pm Monday-Friday  
 9am-7pm Saturday-Sunday

### Branch Post Offices

| Name                   | Address           | Postal Code | Telephone      |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Gusukuma Post Office   | 3-6-9 Gusukuma    | 901-2133    | (098) 878-7809 |
| Iso Post Office        | 3-3-15 Iso        | 901-2132    | (098) 876-2992 |
| Jicchaku Post Office   | 118-1 Jicchaku    | 901-2122    | (098) 878-7001 |
| Maeda Post Office      | 1301 Maeda        | 901-2102    | (098) 876-9007 |
| Makiminato Post Office | 1-7-18 Makiminato | 901-2131    | (098) 877-2719 |
| Miyagi Post Office     | 1-32-3 Miyagi     | 901-2126    | (098) 878-1550 |
| Uchima Post Office     | 2-11-19 Uchima    | 901-2121    | (098) 878-0799 |
| Yafuso Post Office     | 203-1 Yafuso      | 901-2127    | (098) 877-5008 |

Post offices and stamp vendors are marked by the sign 〒.

### Domestic Mail

- **Letters** (Tegami 手紙) and **Postcards** (Hagaki はがき)  
 Postage is ¥82 for a standard domestic letter (up to 25g) and ¥52 for a standard domestic postcard.
- **Parcels** (Kozutsumi 小包)  
 You can send packages of up to 30kg. The postal rate is slightly lower if you are sending printed material (e.g. books, magazines, newsletters, calendars, ect.) If you want this rate, tell the postal worker your package is a sasshi-kozutsumi (冊子小包).
- **Registered Mail** (Kakitome 書留)  
 With registered mail, you can track the progress of your letter or parcel. It is also possible to send cash through this service. To send cash, you must also purchase a cash registration envelop (genkin kakitome fūtō 現金書留封筒) from the post office for ¥20.

### International Mail

- **EMS**  
 EMS is the speediest way to send packages and documents abroad. EMS can be sent to over 120 countries and areas world-wide. Computerized tracking is also available for 40 countries and regions for a fee, as is insurance. Delivery speed differs between regions, but generally it takes only 2-4 days. You will need to fill out a special EMS envelope or label for your letter or package. These are available at the post office.
- **Airmail** (Kōkūbin 航空便)  
 Airmail is the standard way to send overseas mail. Delivery speed depends on mail conditions in the destination country, but mail will generally arrive in 3-6 days. To send something by airmail, simply write "Airmail" on the packaging, or ask the post office staff for an airmail sticker.
- **Economy Air (SAL)**  
 Economy Air is a method by which parcels and printed matter are air transported abroad using open space on airplanes. This method is less expensive than airmail but faster than surface mail. Delivery generally takes 6-13 days. To use this service, write "SAL" on the packaging, or ask the post office staff for an SAL sticker.
- **Surface Mail** (Senbin 船便)  
 Surface mail is significantly cheaper than other methods. However, surface mail takes 1-3 months to reach its destination. Write "surface" on the packaging to send mail with this method.

### Urasoe Postal Codes (Yūbin Bangō 郵便番号)

|                |          |                 |          |                             |          |
|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Ahacha (安波茶)   | 901-2114 | Kyozuka (経塚)    | 901-2111 | Nishihara (西原)              | 901-2101 |
| Gusukuma (城間)  | 901-2133 | Maeda (前田)      | 901-2102 | Ohira (大平)                  | 901-2113 |
| Inanse (伊奈武瀬)  | 901-2128 | Makiminato (牧港) | 901-2131 | Takushi (沢岬)                | 901-2112 |
| Irijima (西洲)   | 901-2123 | Minatogawa (港川) | 901-2134 | Toyama (当山)                 | 901-2104 |
| Iso (伊祖)       | 901-2132 | Miyagi (宮城)     | 901-2126 | Uchima (内間)                 | 901-2121 |
| Jicchaku (勢理客) | 901-2122 | Nakama (仲間)     | 901-2103 | Yafuso (屋富祖)                | 901-2127 |
| Kowan (小湾)     | 901-2124 | Nakanishi (仲西)  | 901-2125 | (Not listed above 901-2100) |          |



## Telephones

### Landlines

Responsible Organizations: NTT (Nippon Telephone & Telegraph)  
Address: 4-35-1 Gusukuma, Urasoe, Okinawa 901-2133 (on Route 58)  
Telephone: (0120) 364-463 (Toll-free)

NTT is responsible for regular landline phone service. To set up service, please visit the Urasoe NTT branch office. There is a one-time sign-up fee (ichiji harai-kin 一時払い金), plus installation charges if your apartment or house does not have wiring or a phone jack. You can avoid the sign-up fee if the person who lived in your apartment before you agrees to transfer their telephone account to you, as opposed to canceling the account.

You will then be charged a monthly telephone fee, plus charges for phone calls you make. You may also purchase a telephone from NTT, but prices are better at local electronic stores.

If you are late in paying your phone bill, you will receive a notice stating that if you do not pay your bill by a certain date, your phone will be cut off. If this happens, you will be required to pay in person during business hours at the Urasoe NTT branch to reinstate service.

If you move to a new apartment, it is possible to have your old telephone service transferred there. Please contact NTT for more details.

Disconnection of service should be made in person at least 15 days in advance. You must bring some identification with you. At this time, you will have the option to transfer the line to another individual if you are selling or giving the line to someone else, or to put your line on hold, so that you can transfer it to your next residence.

NTT also has a website (with English). For detailed information about prices at different times of day and other such information, please check it out here: <http://www.ntt.co.jp>

### Mobile Phones (Keitai Denwa 携帯電話)

A cell phone may be a more practical option than buying a landline phone, both because of the prohibitive cost of landline phone installation and the portability of the cell phone. If you decide to get a cell phone, you will need your Residence Card and personal seal.

There are 3 major cell phone companies in Japan: AU, NTT Docomo, and SoftBank. AU has the best reception throughout Okinawa, and has transmission towers even on small outer islands. In other ways, all of the companies are quite similar.

Cell phones may cost around ¥10,000-¥20,000, depending on the model. All companies offer discounts for students, families, couples, and multi-year contracts. These may entail lower rates, a discount on the cell phone itself, and other benefits. Please note that most contracts last 2 years, and companies may charge a fee for withdrawing before the contract ends.

### International & Long Distance Phone Calls

Unless you sign up for services through other companies, you will automatically be directed through KDDI on long-distance and international calls. It is not the cheapest option, so consider looking into supplementary plans if you will be making a lot of long distance or international calls.

To make an international phone call, dial 010 + Country Code + Area Code + Phone Number. Unless you sign up for a different company's services, you will be directed through KDDI.

Brastel is a long-distance calling company that offers reasonable rates, and Internet phone services such as Skype allow you to make calls for free. If you have a smart phone, you can also use applications such as LINE and WhatsApp to make free international phone calls to other people who also use the same application.

### Calling On-Base Phone Numbers

To call an on-base phone number from off base, first dial 911-5111, wait for the dial tone, and then dial the on-base phone number. The on-base operators sometimes get jammed with calls, in which case you will find yourself unable to get through to the number you want to reach via the operator (the initial number listed above).



## Internet

You can get broadband internet service through NTT, Yahoo BB, or a number of smaller companies. Most large electronics stores have booths for broadband providers.

Wireless internet connections are available at various restaurants and cafes throughout Urasoe, such as McDonald's and Starbucks.

## Television

Local TV Channel Guide

- Channel 1 Japan Broadcasting Corporation NHK
- Channel 2 NHK Educational
- Channel 3 Ryukyu Broadcasting Corp RBC
- Channel 5 Ryukyu Asahi Broadcasting QAB
- Channel 8 Okinawa Television OTV

Please check Okinawa Cable Network Inc. for more information.

[http://www.nirai.ne.jp/english/en\\_catv/en\\_catv\\_guide.html](http://www.nirai.ne.jp/english/en_catv/en_catv_guide.html)

## English Television Programming

If you have a bilingual TV, you will be able to receive foreign language programming on selected shows. Bilingual programs are marked in the newspaper with a symbol. These programs include a few foreign films, RBC news at 6pm, and NHK news translated into English that is broadcast during the week from 7 to 7:20 pm. Some news programs are not translated over the weekend. To listen to NHK and RBC English language broadcasts, a converter is required. You will have to buy a television with bilingual capabilities (Onsei Tajū Kirikae 音声多重切り替え ).

## Cable Television

Responsible Organizations: **Okinawa Cable Network (OCN)**  
 Address: 1-18-26 4F Matsuo, Naha, Okinawa 900-0014  
 Telephone: (098) 863-4141

In order to receive cable television, you must contact OCN. OCN offers several channels with programming in English, as well as numerous Japanese channels. There are several large costs up-front. There is a fixed start-up fee of ¥10,500, and then an installation fee that depends on the difficulty involved in the installation (you should expect to pay around ¥20,000 for this). Set-up and monthly fees depend upon the channels to which you subscribe, but basic service costs around ¥3,360 a month (including cable box rental). Sometimes, OCN offers "campaigns," during which the installation and start-up fees are dramatically reduced.

## Satellite Television

Satellite Television is available in Okinawa. In order to use satellite television, you must either rent or buy a small satellite dish. These are available at several electronics shops in Okinawa. There is an array of different channels, including BBC World, CNN International, MTV, ESPN, Discovery Channel, Pay per View. There are programs in several different languages including Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, English, Chinese, and Spanish.

## Public Television Fee

NHK offers commercial-free television by covering its expenses through subscription. Residents in Japan with TVs are expected, but not obliged, to pay this fee in accordance with the Broadcasting Law. However, residents who do not speak Japanese might not be asked to pay. If you do not wish to pay, you can explain to the collector that you cannot understand Japanese, and therefore you do not watch NHK. NHK bill collectors visit houses and apartment complexes every two months. (Fee is approximately ¥2000/month.)

## Newspapers

- Ryukyu Shimpō 琉球新報 <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/>
- Okinawa Times 沖縄タイムス <https://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/category/okinawa-beat>
- Japan Times <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/>
- Japan Update <http://www.japanupdate.com>

## Pets

When looking for a pet, please consider adopting an unwanted dog or cat. There are many abandoned animals at the Prefectural Animal Protection Center. Before getting a pet, please double check that your residence allows animals.

### Bringing Pets to Japan

Responsible Organization: **Prefectural Quarantine Office** (Dōbutsu Ken-eki-sho 動物検疫所)  
Address: Naha Port Office: 2-11-1 Minato-cho, Naha, Okinawa 900-0001  
Telephone: (098) 945-3043

The Prefectural Quarantine Office gives out information on Japan's quarantine regulations if you plan to bring a pet with you to Japan. Laws vary according to type of animal, country of origin, and whether the animal has had all the necessary shots. They also have information in various languages online at:

<http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/languages/info.html>

### Owning a Dog

Responsible Organization: **Environmental Conservation Section** (Kankyō Hozen-ka 環境保全課)  
Urasoe City Hall, 5th Floor  
Telephone: (098) 876-1234 (ext.3216)

#### All Dog Owners are Responsible for Registration

If you own a dog, it must be registered at City Hall. Please visit the Environmental Conservation Section to complete the registration. Upon registration, you will receive a registration tag which your dog must wear at all times. Your dog's birthdate will be used during the registration process.


| Tag Image   | Details   |
|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration Fee: ¥ 3,000</li> <li>Replacement Tags: ¥ 1,600</li> <li>This tag is to certify that your dog has been registered.</li> <li>Registration is valid throughout the dog's lifetime.</li> </ul> |

Please contact the Environmental Conservation Section for the following changes:

- Change in Owner.
- Change in Owner's Name.
- Change of Residence. (Within Urasoe City.)
- Notification of Dog's Death.
- Notification of Missing Dog.

#### April, May, and June are Vaccination Months

All dogs must be vaccinated against rabies (kyōken-byō 狂犬病) once a year. Every year between April and June, the city provides rabies vaccinations in local community centers. Contact the Environmental Conservation Section for exact dates. If you acquire a new pet after or before the public vaccination period, please visit a veterinarian to get the vaccination. There is a small fee for the vaccination.

| Tag Image   | Details   |
|---|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vaccination Tag: ¥ 550</li> <li>Replacement Tags: ¥ 340</li> <li>This tag is to certify that your dog has been vaccinated.</li> <li>Vaccination must be done 1 time per year.</li> </ul> |

### Owning a Cat

There are no special regulations regarding keeping cats, but you may want to get a collar and tags with your address and phone number for your cat, so that it can be returned to you if it gets lost. Cat owners are encouraged to keep their cat indoors to avoid accidents with cars and the spread of disease.



## Common Pet Issues

### Spaying, Neutering and Animal Population Control

There are many stray animals in Okinawa. Unless you plan to breed your pet, spaying or neutering it will prevent unwanted pregnancies, thereby reducing the problem. Sterilization serves both the human and the animal community by preventing disease and stray dog attacks. Consult your veterinarian about the appropriate time to have surgery performed (usually 8 weeks old). In Okinawa, most veterinarians charge about ¥20,000 for spaying or neutering pets.

#### Veterinarians in Urasoe

**Makiminato Pet Clinic** (Makiminato Petto Kurinikku 牧港ペットクリニック)

Address: 2-46-12 Makiminato, Urasoe, Okinawa 901-2131

Telephone: (098) 879-1125

### Stray Pets

Responsible Organization: **Prefectural Animal Protection Center** (Okinawa-ken Dōbutsu Aigo Sentā 沖縄県動物愛護センター)

Address: 2000 Ozato, Ozato, Nanjo, Okinawa 901-1202

Telephone: (098) 945-3043

Stray animals are picked up by the Animal Protection Center. Please contact them if your pet is missing. If the pet has identification, an animal control officer will attempt to contact the owner. Animals without identification tags will be put to sleep after three days (cats) or four days (dogs).

### Pet Sitting

If you are unable to have a friend take care of your pet while you are away, you can check the animal into a "pet hotel" (petto hōteru ペットホテル).

### Giving up your Pet

If you can no longer care for your pet, please try to find a new owner before contacting the Animal Protection Center. You can leave your pet with them. Some pets are adopted, but if your pet is not adopted quickly, it will be put to sleep.

### Death of a Pet

If your pet dies, you are responsible for dealing with the remains. You may bury pets on land that you own, or you may make arrangements with a private Pet Funeral Company (petto sōgi-sha ペット葬儀社).

In the case of dogs, you will also have to submit a notification of death to the Environmental Conservation Section.