

Mobility: Immigration alert

October 2020



Japan

Immigration information: 5 October 2020

Executive summary

Japan opens borders for business travelers and holders of status of residence

The government of Japan (GOJ) announced that short-term business travelers and holders of mid to long-term status of residence will be permitted to enter Japan from 1 October 2020, provided they consent to border control and additional quarantine measures. Status of residence include "business manager", "intra-company transferee", "engineer/specialist in humanities/international services", "nursing care", "highly skilled professional", "technical intern training", "specified skilled worker", "designated activities", "student", "dependent" and others.

Key issues

Border control and additional quarantine measures required for foreigners wishing to enter Japan with status of residence from countries that are currently subject to denial of permission of landing are as follows:

- ▶ Health monitoring for 14 days prior to departure
- ▶ Written oath and letter by the accepting/inviting entity in Japan
- ▶ Certificate of negative COVID-19 test result issued by a medical institution
- ▶ Valid visa or travel approval documents issued by the local Japanese embassy or consulate
- ▶ COVID-19 test upon arrival at the airport
- ▶ Tracking and monitoring application software installed and activated on smartphone

- ▶ Quarantine at home or designated location for 14 days¹
- ▶ Refrain from using public transportation

¹ Residents of Singapore may also enter Japan for short-term business trips, in which case business activities would be allowed immediately after arrival without the 14-day home-quarantine period. Short-term business travelers wishing to enter Japan under this framework must submit a "schedule of activities in Japan" and consent to limit the area of activities to the minimum, such as between the location of stay and business destination, refrain from using public transportation, and avoid contact with random people or crowds.

Residents of other countries wishing to enter Japan for short-term business trips must comply to the 14-day quarantine.

Impact of this announcement

Those with a Certificate of Eligibility (COE) can now come to Japan to begin their assignments. However, there are many points that must be considered.

- ▶ Timing is crucial in preparing to enter Japan
- ▶ Most embassies and consulates are currently accepting visa applications and requests for those with reservations only. Check with the embassy or consulate that has jurisdiction over your place of residence before scheduling your travels.
- ▶ You need to take your temperature for 14 days before departure.

- ▶ Flights to Japan are currently limited, so book your flight as soon as you have your reservation at the embassy or consulate.
- ▶ Ask your company to prepare the written oath and send you digital copies.
- ▶ Schedule to be tested for COVID-19.

Scenarios

Expired Certificate of Eligibility (COE)

I am a German national currently in Germany and have a COE that was issued in March. Can I still apply for a visa and enter Japan using this COE?

- ▶ Yes, the validity period of all COEs issued after 1 October 2019 have been extended to 6 months after the denial of landing measures have been removed for your country or to 30 April 2021, whichever comes first, so you can still use your COE to apply for a visa and enter Japan, provided you submit a confirmation letter from your sponsoring company.
- ▶ Please note that the aforementioned requirements apply to all travelers wishing to enter Japan from countries that have been subject to denial of landing.

Re-entry permissions

I left Japan to visit my family in India in February and have not been able to return due to COVID-19. Can I return to Japan with my valid residence card (RC) and the special re-entry permission now?

- ▶ Yes, you can now return to Japan.
- ▶ You must also follow the aforementioned requirements for border control and additional quarantine measures to re-enter Japan.

Suspended visas

I am a Chinese national living in the US and obtained a visa to Japan using a COE, but the visa was suspended due to travel restrictions to Japan in relation to COVID-19. Can I still use this visa to enter Japan now?

- ▶ No. The suspended visa will not be reinstated. If you wish to enter Japan, you must reapply for your visa at the Japanese embassy or consulate that has jurisdiction over your current place of residence with your COE and a confirmation letter from your sponsoring company.

Nationals of visa-exempt countries

I am a UK national and wish to visit Japan for 3 weeks to attend a conference. Since the UK has visa exemption arrangements with Japan, I would not need to apply for a visa. Am I correct?

- ▶ No. All foreigners must apply for a visa at the Japanese embassy or consulate that has jurisdiction over your current place of residence, even if the visa exemption arrangement is in effect between your country of nationality and Japan.
- ▶ The aforementioned requirements would also apply.

Dependents and visitors

I am currently working in Japan with a company-sponsored status of residence. I would like my wife and children to come to Japan. What should I do?

- ▶ If your family are coming to live in Japan as your dependents, you should apply for a COE for each member. Once the COEs are issued, they can apply for their dependent visas at the Japanese embassy or consulate that has jurisdiction over their place of residence.
- ▶ Please note that they must comply with the aforementioned requirements to enter Japan.
- ▶ If your family merely wish to visit you, unfortunately, Japan is currently not allowing temporary visitors for non-business purposes yet.

Emergency cases and special measures at embassies and consulates

I tried to make a reservation at the Japanese consulate near my home but was told that I had to wait for 3 weeks. What can I do?

- ▶ Although normally, embassies and consulates only accept visa applications and requests from those living in areas within their jurisdiction, we have had cases where applicants were able to submit their visa applications at other locations.
- ▶ Some embassies also accept emergency cases and/or expedite the issuance process for cases that require immediate attention e.g. family health issues.
- ▶ Please contact your local Japanese embassy or consulate to confirm that they will accept your request and/or expedite your process beforehand.

¹ For further details on required documents and procedures, please contact EYGH.

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EYG no. 006813-20GbI

2005-3488310

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