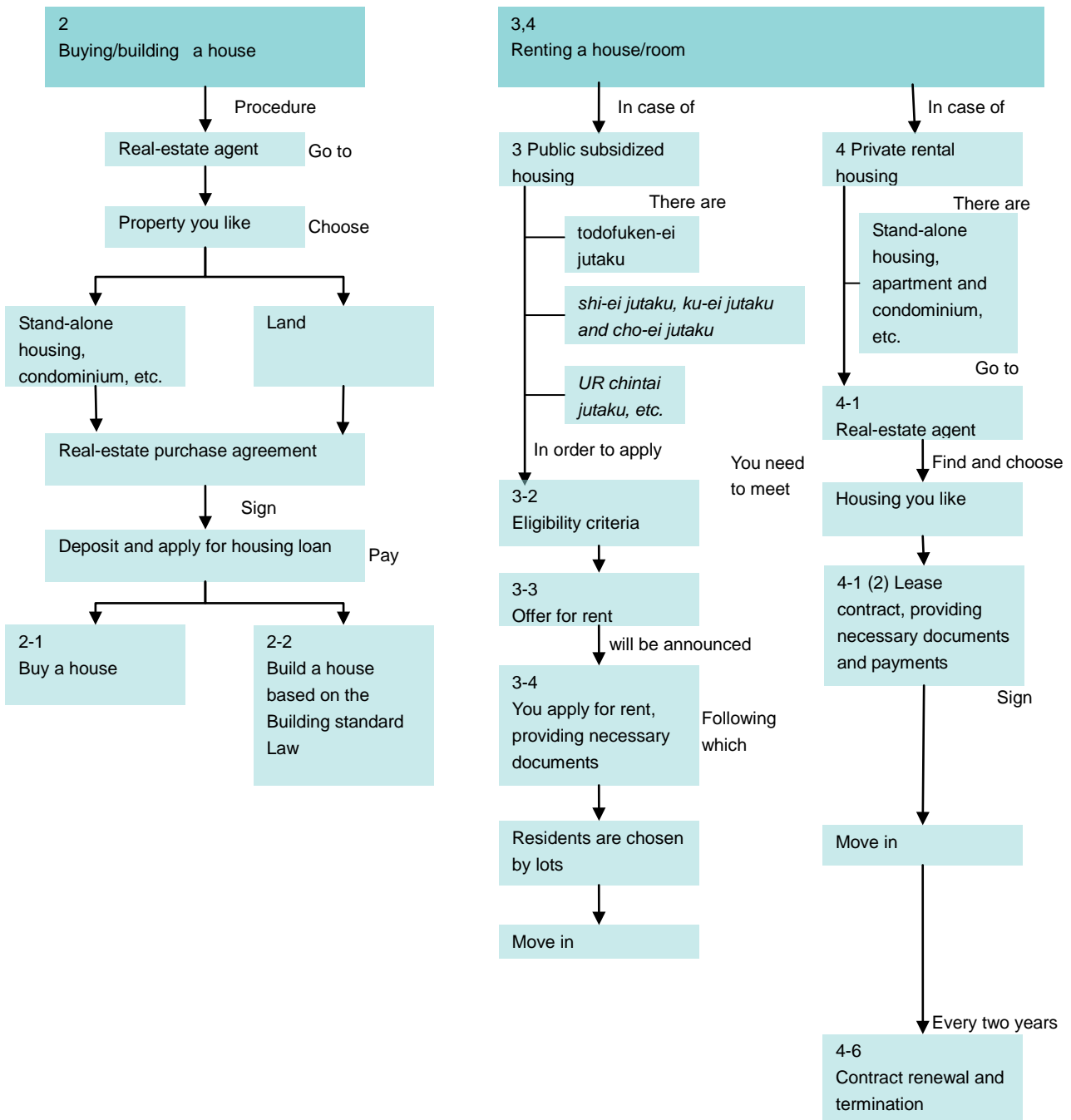


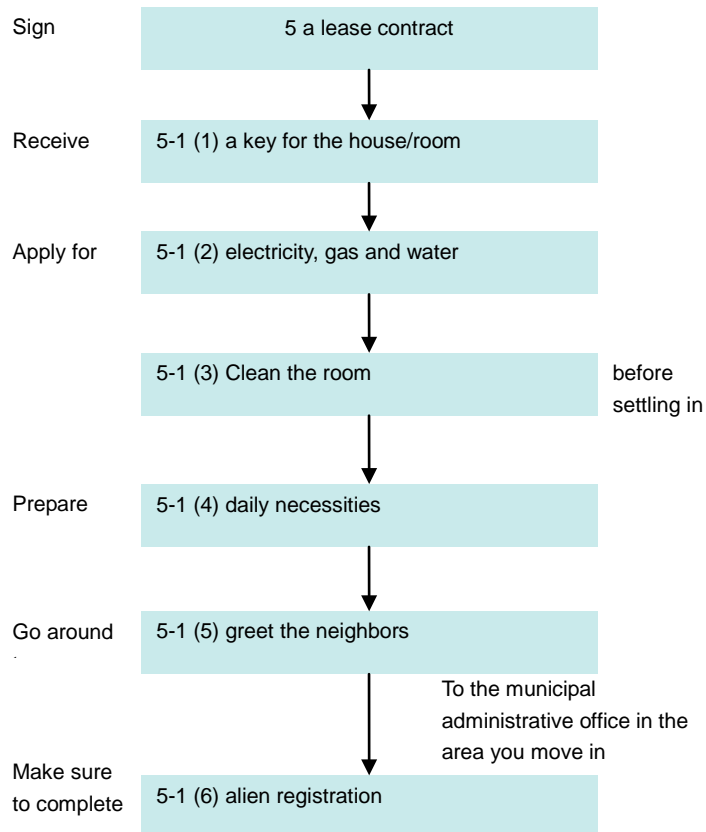


To live in Japan



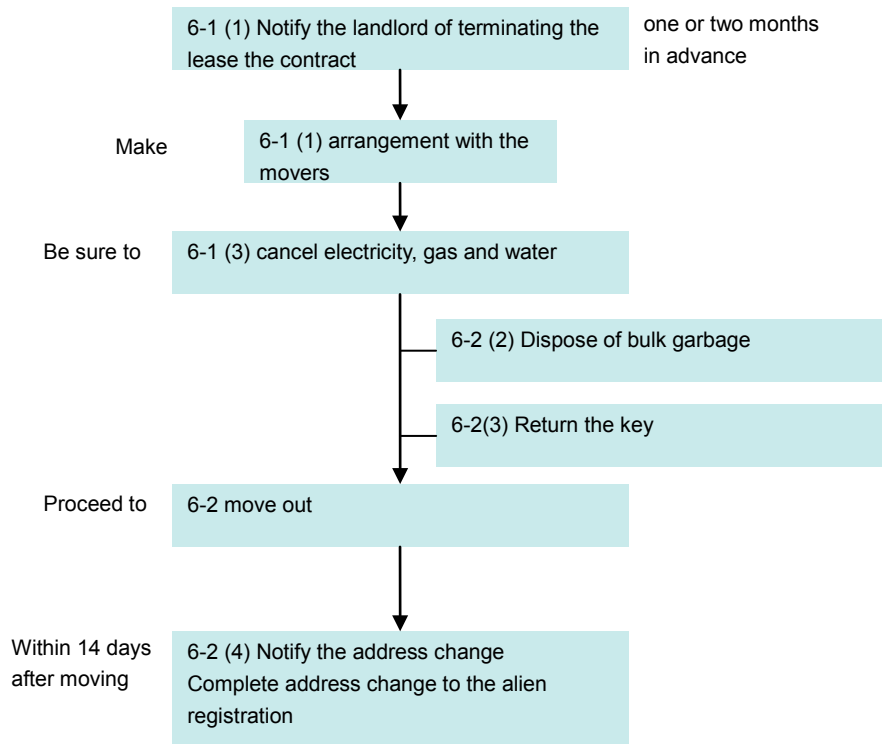


Moving into rental housing for the first time





Moving out





Broadly speaking, there are three types of Japanese housing: "owned housing," "public subsidized housing," and "private rental housing." This section explains the features of each type of housing, size and layout of Japanese housing, description of floors, and community associations, as well as other details.

1 Housing

1-1 About Japanese housing

(1) Owned housing

House with ownership is called mochi-ie (literally, owned housing) in Japan. There are various kinds of building such as stand-alone housing and apartment. In order to own a house, you need to undergo a series of procedures and sign various contracts concerning purchase. When building your own house, there are various requirements that need to be kept. For details, please refer to "[2 Owned Housing](#)" in this chapter.

(2) Public subsidized housing

Public subsidized housing (koteki jutaku) is provided by the local authorities (metropolitan or prefectural government, municipal government, etc.) and public corporations. They are rented at lower rent for people who have difficulty finding a house, and include todofuken-ei jutaku (administrated by the metropolitan or prefectural government), kumin jutaku (administrated by the ward), shi-ei jutaku (administrated by the city), cho-ei jutaku (administrated by the town), UR chintai jutaku (rental housing administrated by the Urban Renaissance Agency). Each of them has specific eligibility rules for residency, and only those meeting these requirements can move in. For details, please refer to "[3 Public Subsidized Housing](#)."

(3) Private rental housing

Private rental housing (chintai jutaku) refers to houses, apartments and other condominium units for rent. Rent is prepaid every month. Some housing requires extra fees such as maintenance fees and common area fees in addition to rent, which are paid together with the rent. For details, please refer to "[4 Private rental housing.](#)"

(4) Size and layout of the housing

The size of the housing is indicated as "senyu menseki (footprint) Xm³," which includes the toilet, bathroom and kitchen besides various rooms. The size of each room is measured by the number of tatami mats used, with the unit called jo for every tatami mat. One jo is basically about 1.6m² (180cm x 90cm, approximately), but there are some variations including apartment-adjusted size (170cm x 85cm) and the one in between (176cm x 88cm).

The number of rooms and types of room are shown by a combination of numbers and alphabets.



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Rooms fitted with tatami mats are called "washitsu" (Japanese-style room) and those with floorings and carpets are called "yoshitsu" (Western-style room).



Examples:

2DK: Housing consisting of two separate rooms and one large space combining the functions of a living room, dining room and kitchen

2: number of bedrooms

L: living room

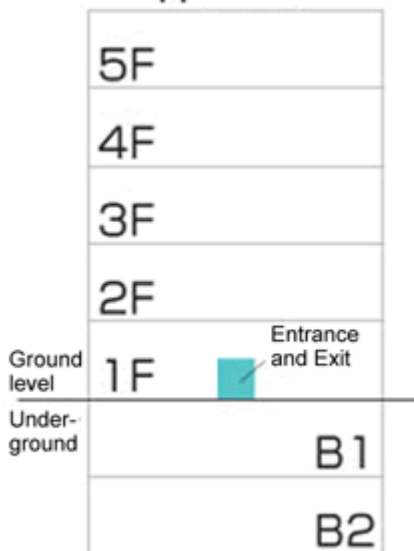
D: dining room

LDK: a space combining living room, dining room and kitchen

DK: a space combining dining room and kitchen

* Layout above is an example.

R (roof, house-top)



(5) Description of floors

In Japan, the ground floor is described as "1F" and first basement level as "B1."

1F - 5F: ground floor to the 5th floor

B2: second basement level

(6) Town associations/neighborhood associations

In Japan, most municipalities (city, ward, town or village) have community association called chonai-kai (town association) or jichi-kai (neighborhood association). Their function is to pass a bulletin (called kairanban, to pass on notification from the municipal administrative office or public health center door-to-door) and to play an active role in anti-crime activities, disaster drills, and neighborhood social events such as festivals. These activities are funded by resident member fees. Foreign citizens, too, can become a member if they are residents. It is a good idea to ask your neighbors about it.





2 Owned housing

Mochi-ie (owned housing) means a house that you own or have inherited, not one that you pay rent for. This section explains what procedures are needed to buy a house and what requirements need to be kept when building a house.

2-1 How to purchase/procedures

When buying a house to become its owner, you do that through a real-estate agent. When you choose a house you want and make a decision to buy, you sign a real-estate purchase agreement (*fudosan baibai-keiyaku*) after receiving explanation on important matters. Then you pay a deposit and in most cases apply for a housing loan. Then you undergo a series of procedures including transfer of home ownership to the buyer and real-estate tax (*kotei shisan-zei*) payment. In most cases, the real-estate agent takes care of the necessary procedures, so it is better to ask.

2-2 Requirements for building houses

When building a house in Japan, you need to have it planned and built in accordance with the Building Standard Law (*kenchiku kijun-ho*). There are various regulations including those concerning the building-to-land ratio (i.e., size of the building relative to the land area) and the limit on height. Houses can only be built after receiving permission from the municipal administrative office. For details, please consult the building guidance division or any responsible section of the municipal administrative office.



3 Public subsidized housing

Koteki jutaku (public subsidized housing) are housing provided by local authorities and public corporations. This section explains the types of public subsidized housing, eligibility, offer for rent and application procedure, among other details.

3-1 Types of housing

Public subsidized housing is distinguished by whether it is provided by the local authorities or public corporations. Housings provided by the local authorities include *todofuken-ei jutaku*, *shi-ei jutaku*, *ku-ei jutaku* and *cho-ei jutaku*, administered by the metropolitan or prefectural government, city, ward and town, respectively. Housing provided by the public corporations include *UR chintai jutaku* (sometimes called *toshikiko jutaku*) rented out by the Urban Renaissance Agency (UR).

3-2 Eligibility

Any type of public subsidized housing has precise eligibility rules concerning alien registration, earnings standard and other requirements. For details, please contact the municipality in charge of administering the housing or UR.

3-3 Offering for rent

Public subsidized housing is offered for rent on a regular basis or as needed. *Todofuken-ei jutaku* is usually offered for rent four times a year (January, April, July and October). Announcement of offers is distributed at the municipal administrative office and other relevant locations.

For *shi-ei jutaku*, *ku-ei jutaku* and *cho-ei jutaku*, announcement of offer is placed in the newsletters issued by the municipality. Newsletters can be obtained at the municipal administrative office or other convenient locations such as nearby stations. They are also distributed through community associations like *jichi-kai* or *chonai-kai*.

For *UR chintai jutaku*, you can access the UR website to find the house you want, and then apply for rent.

3-4 Application procedures

After confirming the eligibility and other necessities, you submit an application for residence to the section in charge of the housing you want, using a designated form and attaching necessary documents.

Since there are many applicants to public subsidized housing, residents are chosen by lot.

Rents are adjusted depending on your income. Besides rents, additional fees including common area fees and parking fees will be required.



Documents required	Where to apply	When to apply	Remarks
<p>1 Application for residence</p> <p>2 Alien registration certificate</p> <p>3 Proof of earnings, etc.</p> <p>4 Others, as needed</p>	<p>Section in charge of the housing offered for rent.</p>	<p>Housing rent by the city, ward, town or UR: on a regular basis or as needed.</p> <p>Housing rent by the metropolitan or prefectural government: usually four times a year (Jan., Apr., Jul., Oct.).</p>	<p>For details, contact the administrator (municipal administrative office or UR).</p>



4 Private rental housing

When renting private rental housing, you need to contact a real-estate agent. It is a good idea to sort out your preference in advance. In many cases, you will need to have money equivalent to five to six months rent ready when signing a lease contract.

4-1 How to find/rent a house (a room)

(1) How to find

Go to a real-estate agency (fudosan-ya, an agency that introduces houses and apartments for rent) in the area you want to move in. Tell them your preferences, including size, limits on rent and distance from the nearest station, and they will present available properties that meet the requirements.

You can begin just by taking a look at property ads posted at the front of the agent, or looking magazines and the internet to search for average rent and properties currently offered in the area you want. If you are an exchange student, you may also consult the student affairs office at the university.

(2) How to rent

When renting a house or apartment, you sign a lease contract called chintai keiyaku. Contract period is usually two years.

When signing the contract, you need to have the following documents and payments ready.

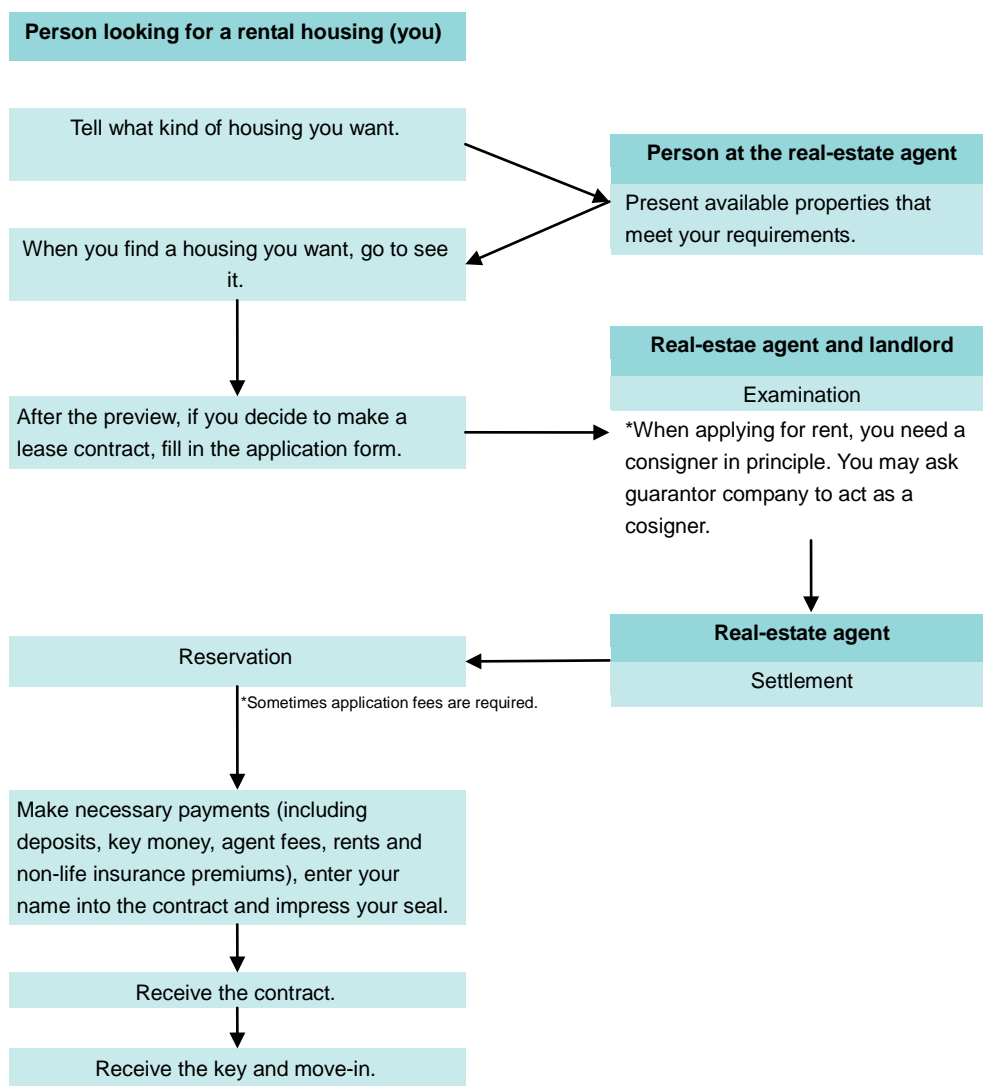
Documents required	Payments to be made
1 Alien registration certificate	1 Rent of the current and following months
2 Proof of earnings, etc.	2 Deposits (see " 7. Terminology ")
3 Cosigner (see "7. Terminology") or written pledge	3 Key money (see " 7. Terminology ")
4 Seal registration certificate, etc.	4 Agent fees (see " 7. Terminology "), etc.
	In total, you need money worth 5-6 months rent in applying for rent.



4 Private rental housing

4-2 Upon renting

(1) Process of renting housing





(2) Do's and don'ts for renting

● Access to Transportation

Access to transportation is described as "X minutes to the nearby station," under an assumption that a person walks 80 meters every minute, which is equivalent to a speed of 4.8km/h and does not count other factors such as slopes, stairs and waiting time at signals. It may be a good idea to try walking to the station before signing a contract.

Pets

In many cases landlords prohibit pets. So if you want to keep your pets, you need to confirm the matter with the real-estate agent.



Conversion and Remodeling

You may not convert or remodel the housing, or let people other than your family live together, without permission of the landlord. You may not rent the part or the whole of the housing to other people, either.



Nailing of paintings



Subletting to other people



What is already provided and what is not?

Rental housing in Japan is provided with certain facilities. Other equipment must be brought in by the resident. The following list indicates what is already provided and what is not.

Provided: electricity, gas, waterworks

Not provided: lighting, cooking gas stoves, oven, furniture, etc. Any other necessary items you must bring in.

(3) Advice for renting

You may encounter some problems when renting a housing. Here are some tips in case problem arises. You may also consult a regional Association for International Communications and Exchanges.

- Cannot speak Japanese: Ask someone who can speak Japanese to go with you. You may give a much better impression if you speak some Japanese, be it just a greeting.

- Does not accept foreigners: Find a real-estate agent through an acquaintance or one that takes orders over the Internet. That may be the quickest way around this.

- **Cannot find a cosigner: You may ask a guarantor company. Please consult the real-estate agent.**



4 Private rental housing

4-3 At a real-estate agent

At a real-estate agent, in most cases you will be asked the following:

1. Name		()
2. Occupation		()
3. Employment status		<input type="checkbox"/> Regular employee <input type="checkbox"/> Contract employee <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Student →With scholarship... <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Expected housemates		() Persons <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ()
5. Constant earning	Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Salary <input type="checkbox"/> Allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Per month: ·Less than ¥100,000 ·¥100,000 ~ ¥150,000 ·¥150,000 ~ ¥200,000 ·¥200,000 ~ ¥250,000 ·¥250,000 ~ ¥300,000 ·More than ¥300,000
	Housemate	<input type="checkbox"/> Salary <input type="checkbox"/> Allowance <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Per month: ·Less than ¥100,000 ·¥100,000 ~ ¥150,000 ·¥150,000 ~ ¥200,000 ·¥200,000 ~ ¥250,000 ·¥250,000 ~ ¥300,000 ·More than ¥300,000
6. Japanese proficiency		<input type="checkbox"/> Can speak <input type="checkbox"/> Daily-conversation level <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot speak
	Speaking	
	Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Can read <input type="checkbox"/> Simple text only <input type="checkbox"/> Hiragana only <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot read
7. Presence of cosigner		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes →Relationship: () <input type="checkbox"/> No →Desire to use guarantor company: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Emergency contact info (other than yourself)		()
9. Identification (ID)		<input type="checkbox"/> Passport <input type="checkbox"/> Alien registration certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ()
10. Plan for leaving Japan		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes () years from now <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
11. Reason for finding housing		()



4 Private rental housing

4-4 Checklist for desirable property

Clarify your preference in advance.

Preference

1. Rent	From ¥ () to ¥ ()
2. Area/location	(1) Nearby station: () (2) Less than () min walk from the station
3. Kind of building	<input type="checkbox"/> Apartment <input type="checkbox"/> Condominium <input type="checkbox"/> Stand-alone housing
4. Floor in the building	() Floor
5. Layout (1) Number of rooms (2) Kind of kitchen (3) Room type	() rooms <input type="checkbox"/> K <input type="checkbox"/> DK <input type="checkbox"/> LDK ※K: kitchen only DK: dining-kitchen LDK: living-dining-kitchen <input type="checkbox"/> Western style <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese style <input type="checkbox"/> No preference
6. Toilet	<input type="checkbox"/> Western style <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese style <input type="checkbox"/> Must have private toilet <input type="checkbox"/> OK with shared toilet
7. Bath	<input type="checkbox"/> Must have bathroom <input type="checkbox"/> OK without bathroom
8. Air conditioner	<input type="checkbox"/> With <input type="checkbox"/> Without
9. Room orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Facing south <input type="checkbox"/> Facing southeast <input type="checkbox"/> Facing any directions other than north <input type="checkbox"/> No preference
10. Surrounding environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Public bath <input type="checkbox"/> Coin washers <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ()
11. Desired date of move-in	From mm / yy



4 Private rental housing

4-5 Items to confirm on the contract

Contract in writing is concluded as an arrangement to clarify rights and duties of the lender and the tenant. Signing a contract (i.e., writing your name) means you have agreed with the content and promised to observe it. So you should read the content thoroughly and get enough explanation on it. It is important that you sign the contract after understanding what is written there. Make sure to confirm the following to prevent troubles.

Rent, maintenance fee	Amount, due date, method of payment
Prohibited matters	Prohibition on pets, etc.
Whether the contract can be renewed	Contract term is usually two years. When renewing the contract after two years, you may be charged the renewal fee from the landlord as well as the real-estate agent.
Conditions for terminating the contract	When terminating the contract, you may not get the deposits back or may be charged exorbitant cleaning fee. To prevent this, agree on the payment to be made upon termination in advance before signing the contract.



4 Private rental housing

4-6 Contract renewal/termination

For rental housing in Japan, lease contracts are renewed every two years. This is called keiyaku koshin (contract renewal). When you want to renew the contract, you need to go to the real-estate agent and submit renewal fees and other items as requested.

On the other hand, if you want to terminate the contract for leaving Japan or moving to other places, you need to notify the real-estate agent and the landlord, at least one or two months in advance.

(1) Contract renewal (renewal procedure)

When you want to renew the contract, you need to apply to the real-estate agent and the landlord. In many cases, rents are raised upon renewal and the landlord may ask for a renewal fee (equivalent to one month's worth of the new rent). You may be also charged renewal fee from the real-estate agent.

For the renewed contract, in most cases the same document signed in the previous contract will be carried over. Sometimes the real-estate agent contacts you before expiration to ask whether you want the renewal. Also, there are cases that rents are not raised and renewal fees are not charged from either landlord or real-estate agent.

(2) Upon termination (termination notice)

When you want to terminate the contract, you need to notify the landlord either directly or through the real-estate agent of the intention to move out. It is important that you make an early notice. As may be stipulated in the contract, you must notify at least one or two months in advance.

If you move out without notifying the landlord or notify just few days before moving out, you may not get the deposits back. So be sure not to postpone termination notice.



5 Moving in

After deciding what house or room to rent and signing the contract, you can then proceed to prepare for moving in. Preparation may include cleaning, application for using electricity, gas and water, and alien registration. You may also want to have daily necessities ready for use in the new home. Also, it is important to greet the nearby residents to get to know each other.

5-1 Moving in for the first time

(1) Receiving a key

After signing a contract, you will be given a key for your house. Make sure to not lose it as you need to return it when moving out. In case you lose it, you must promptly notify the landlord and the real-estate agent. Sometimes you may be asked to pay for replacing the key. Such measures are essential for preventing crimes.

(2) Applying for electricity, gas, water

For lifeline utilities (electricity, gas, water), make sure you complete applications to use them before moving in. You can undertake the following procedures, although the details may vary slightly according to region.

	Electricity	Gas	Water
When to start service	Upon moving in, or after receiving the key	Upon moving in, or after receiving the key	Upon moving in, or after receiving the key
Where to contact	Electricity company in the region	Gas company in the region	Municipal waterworks department
Procedure	Pull up circuit breaker switch to turn on the electricity. Send the form attached to the breaker after filling in your name, address, and the starting date. If there is no form attached, call the electricity company directly.	Call the gas company to have the valve opened on the day you want to start using it. The company will send a person to open the valve on the day and time you specify.	Contact the municipal waterworks department, etc., and have a person come to open the valve on the day you want to start using it. In some case, you open the valve by yourself and send a specific form after filling in your name, address, and the starting date.
Remarks		Most rental housing are not provided with gas stoves for cooking. You may need to purchase it beforehand.	Upon visit or contract, make sure to ask whether water can be used right after moving in.

(3) Room cleaning

Rooms for rent are mostly kept well. Nevertheless, you may want to clean up before moving in to start a new life



comfortably. To make the process easier, it is important to apply for using electricity, gas and water beforehand.

(4) Providing daily necessities

In general, rental housing in Japan is not provided with furniture and curtains. Daily necessities such as furniture, appliances, bedding, kitchenware, toiletries must be prepared by the residents.

(5) Greetings after moving in

In Japan, there is a custom for the new residents to greet the neighbors. It is important to acquaint yourself with the nearby residents who may become an important information source on the region. Introduce yourself briefly by clarifying your name and occupation.

(6) Alien registration

Resister at the municipal administrative office of the area you live in. For details, please refer to "[B Alien Registration, 1-1 Upon Arrival in Japan.](#)"



5 Moving in

5-2 General rules for daily life

(1) How to dispose of garbage

Manners of garbage disposal vary by region or municipality. Different kinds of garbage are set to be collected on different days and times. Some of the bulk garbage and certain kinds of garbage that cannot be easily disposed of require fees to be collected, or are not collected by the municipality. It is advisable to confirm the matter with the real-estate agent, nearby residents and municipal administrative office (see the following list). In Japan, it is considered very important to cooperate on reducing, reusing and recycling garbage (please refer to "[O Other Daily Life Issues, 2-2 Rules and Manners of Daily Life: Garbage](#)").

[Matters to be confirmed]

- Distinction between combustible and non-combustible garbage
 - Distinction of recyclables (jars and glass bottles, cans, PET bottles, newspapers, etc.)
 - Place of collection
 - Days and times of collecting different kinds of garbage
 - How to dispose of bulk (large-sized) garbage
 - Whether specified disposal bags must be used
- etc.



[Example of garbage separation]



Combustibles

Kitchen and other food garbage, papers, woods, clothes (some of them are treated as recyclables in certain municipalities).



Non-combustibles

Metals, glasses, porcelains, compact appliances, plastics, rubber products, etc.



Recyclables

Cans, jars and glass bottles, PET bottles, paper packages, newspapers, etc., are collected separately as recyclables in some municipalities.



Bulk garbage

Furniture, bedding, home appliances (excluding air conditioner, television, refrigerator and laundry machine) exceeding 30 cubic centimeters in size, bicycles, etc.

Note:

- Different expressions are used for types of garbage depending on the region: for example, "Kanen-gomi / Funen-gomi," "Moeru-gomi / Moenai-gomi," "Moyaseru-gomi / Moyasenai-gomi," and so on for distinguishing combustibles and non-combustibles.
- It used to be that the items that produce toxic gas when burned or heat up to the extent of damaging the incinerator are generally considered "non-combustibles." Recently, however, municipalities are introducing different criteria on separating garbage, so you need to be careful.
- Some types of garbage, even if combustible, must be separated as "non-combustibles" in certain municipalities due to their distinct garbage treatment methods and community rules.

(2) How to use the kitchen

Use the kitchen neatly. Do not dispose of solid garbage and oil down the drain. Solid garbage clogs the drain; oil contaminates rivers and ocean. When disposing oil, use newspapers to absorb the oil, which can then be disposed of as combustibles.

(3) Notes on noise created by everyday living

Noise from everyday living can cause trouble with the neighbors. Make sure to keep the noise down from night to early morning. Also, it is advisable to refrain from making a lot of noise on a daily basis. Sound from television sets, speakers, instruments, vacuum cleaners, laundry machines, showers and drains can sometimes be taken as "noise," as well as loud conversation and opening and closing of doors. So be careful with the noise from everyday living.



[Kinds of sound that can be taken as “noise”]



Sound from television set, radio, speakers, etc.



Sound of using vacuum cleaners and laundry machine



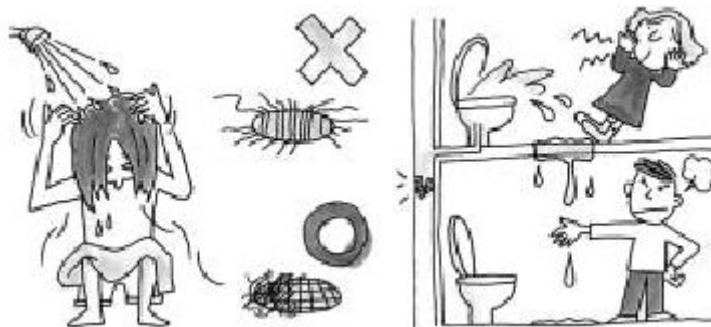
Loud conversation



Opening and closing of doors

(4) How to use bathrooms/toilets

When the drain clogs while using toilet or bathroom, water overflows which causes a great mess. If the water is spilled downstairs, you may sometimes have to pay for repair. Make sure you keep hair out of the drain. When using the toilet, do not dispose of anything other than toilet paper that dissolves in water. (Tissue paper that does not dissolve in water and sanitary napkins must go into a garbage bin since they can clog the drain).



Drain clogs, causing water overflow. Toilet: do not dispose of anything other than toilet



Toilet paper



Tissue paper



paper.

(5) How to use balconies

If the balcony is used for an emergency escape route, be careful not to block the exit with boxes and other items. Also, keep items off the walls or partitions separating the adjacent balconies.

When hanging beddings and clothes outside to dry or growing potted plants, make sure they are not likely to fall off the balcony.



Be careful to not let futons and pots fall off the balcony.

(6) How to use common spaces

In condominium buildings, halls, corridors and staircases outside your room are considered common spaces to be used by everyone. They will also serve as an emergency escape route in case of earthquake and fire, so do not leave your personal belongings there.

(7) How to use parking lots for bicycles/cars

If you live in a condominium building, bicycles must be parked in line at a set place such as bicycle shed.

You need to rent a parking space for automobile. Roadside parking is not permitted. Parking space is rent by paying monthly fee, so you should only park at your own space even if there are extra spaces.



6 Moving out

When moving out, notify the landlord as soon as the moving-out date is decided. Usually, people ask the movers do the actual moving-out tasks. Make sure to cancel utilities such as electricity and gas. Clean the room; do not leave the garbage behind.

6-1 Preparation for moving

(1) Notification to the landlord

You need to notify the landlord of terminating the lease contract within the period stipulated in the contract (usually one or two months in advance).

(2) Different options for moving

There are many movers in Japan. Besides professional movers, cargo distributors also offer moving-out services. The rate varies according to the cargo volume, distance, and service contents. You may be advised to have estimates from several movers and confirm the rate and service contents in order to choose the mover that meets your need. Estimates can be compared by using the Internet and other means.

There is also an option of not using the mover, by renting a car from a friend or lease company.

(3) Cancellation of electricity, gas, water

Make sure to notify the company at least two or three days prior to moving out.

	Electricity	Gas	Water
When	Two or three days prior to moving out	Two or three days prior to moving out	Two or three days prior to moving out
Where to contact	Nearby electricity company outlet	Nearby gas company outlet	Municipal waterworks department or nearby water provider
Procedure	A person in charge will come on the day of moving out to stop the power and settle the outstanding fees.	A person in charge will come on the day of moving out to stop the gas and settle the outstanding fees.	A person in charge will come on the day of moving out to close the main valve and settle the outstanding fees.



6 Moving out

6-2 Moving

(1) Removal of belongings

You must remove all personal belongings from the house. Rooms must be cleaned and left without garbage.

(2) Bulk garbage

If you need to dispose of bulk garbage such as furniture or a large amount of garbage at once, you must contact the municipal administrative office to confirm on the disposal method with a person in charge.

(3) Returning the key

Make sure to return the key and have the standing deposits settled. You need to follow the "restitution rule" stipulated in the contract, and have the room inspected by the landlord and real-estate agent.

*When leaving the room, the deposits are settled based on a principle called "genjo-kaifuku (restitution)." What is meant by "restitution" may vary depending on the landlord and the contract. The rule may sometimes become a source of trouble, so it is advisable to confirm the extent of responsibility for restitution when signing the contract and to confirm the original state of the room before moving in. In some cases, it may be useful to take photographs of the room. When moving out (i.e., terminating the contract), what remains of the deposit after subtracting the restitution fees will be returned.

(4) Address change

When changing residence, you need to take the following procedure. Make sure to not leave anything out.

Procedure

	Procedure
Address change to the alien registration	Within 14 days after moving, bring your alien registration card and lease contract (any document that certifies your residency) to the municipal administrative office of the area you moved in, and have the new address registered.
National health insurance and national pension system	In case of tenshutsu (moving to a different municipality), complete the procedures for a change of address (jusho henko) to the alien registration at the municipal administrative office of the area you move into. When you do this, inform the office if you subscribe to the national health insurance and national pension systems.

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Driver's license	Go to the police station in the area you have moved in and submit an address change notice.
Telephone	For cell phone, notify the address change to the provider. For home phone, call "116" (NTT enquiries) to have the phone line moved to the new place.
Financial institutions	Notify the address change. For details, contact the banks, etc., where you have accounts.
Postal service	Submit an address change notice to the postal office in the area you moved in. Mails sent to the old address will be transferred to the new address for a year after moving.

* Tenkyo means moving to a new residence. In municipal administrative office, tenkyo refers to a change of residence within the same municipality, which is distinguished from tenshutsu, a change of residence to a different municipality.



7 Terminology for Housing

Real-estate agent (*fudosan-ya*)

Outlet that act as intermediary for buying or selling real estates and for leasing or renting private rental housings.

Housing rent (*yachin*)

One month fee for the house or room being rent. Every month, the tenant prepay the rent for the next month. So when moving in, the tenant first pay two months' rent: one for that month and another for the following month. Rents are usually debited from the bank account. In some cases, the tenant will be asked to pay by transferring money to the specified bank account.

Management fees/common area fees (*kanri-hi, kyoeki-hi*)

Fees associated with the common spaces (staircases, halls, etc.) and facilities, including maintenance, electricity, and cleaning. They are paid separately from the rent.

Deposits (*shikikin*)

Money that the tenant gives as a deposit to the landlord (*yanushi*, literally a person who owns the house) when signing the lease contract. Usually the tenant deposits one to three months' rent. If the tenant has not paid some of the rents, or has damaged or contaminated the room, the deposits will be used to settle standing payments and to pay for necessary repairs. When moving out, what has left of the deposits after subtracting these fees will be returned.

Key money (*reikin*)

Money the tenant pays to the landlord as a payback when signing the contract. Usually one or two months' rent is paid, which will not be returned.

Agent fees (*chukai tesu-ryo*)

Fees the tenant pays to the real-estate agent for introducing the room. Usually one month's rent is paid.

Non-life insurance premiums (*songai hoken-ryo*)

When signing the lease contract, the tenant pays insurance premiums if furniture and other assets need to be insured. Depending on the kind of insurance, damage from fire and water leakage will also be covered.



Contract renewal fees (*keiyaku koshin-ryo*)

Contract period for rental housing is usually two years. When renewing the contract after two years, the landlord may charge renewal fees equivalent to about one month rent.

Joint guarantor or cosigner (*rentai hoshonin*)

A person who takes liability in case the tenant become unable to pay the rent and other fees. In many cases, a tenant need to have a cosigner when applying for rent. If you cannot find a cosigner, you may use a guarantor company instead.

Town associations/neighborhood associations (*chonai-kai, jichi-kai*)

Community associations organized by the residents. Their function includes passing a bulletin (*kairanban*) of notices from the municipal administrative office, etc., and holding disaster drills. They also host neighborhood social events such as festivals. Some of them require membership fees (around 300 yen per month).

Housemates (*dokyo-sha*)

To live with a housemate in the rental housing, the tenant needs to notify the landlord when signing the contract. Without notice, in some cases they may risk eviction.