

MCB BUTLER HANDBOOK 5100

Japanese Traffic Regulations for SOFA Licensed Drivers



Compliments of the
MICPAC Installation Safety Office
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INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose. This handbook covers common elements 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.

2. General

a. The operation of privately owned vehicles (POV) within Japan is considered a privilege agreed 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.

b. 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 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 lead to criminal prosecution under article 211 of the Japanese Penal Code, "Injury or Death through Occupational or Professional Negligence."

c. Penalties can be costly and severe as 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.

3. Traffic Signs. 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 C easily recognizable.

4. Disclaimer

a. This handbook includes traffic safety regulations/requirements while operating a motor vehicle on Marine Corps Installations on 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.

b. 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 safely navigating a motorized vehicle during your overseas tour.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW

1. Traffic Lanes

a. A primary traffic 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.

b. Vehicles 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:

- (1) Solid yellow centerline = No passing from either lane.
- (2) Double solid yellow centerline = No passing from either lane.
- (3) Solid yellow line next to a broken yellow centerline = No passing from the lane nearest the solid yellow line.

CAUTION: When operating a vehicle at night during inclement weather, road markings and lane separation lines tend to “fade” due to the type of paint used on Japanese roadways.

c. Whenever a sidewalk is separated from the roadway, vehicles must travel on the roadway. However, a vehicle may cross a 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.**

d. Vehicles must not be driven into safety zones.

e. 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.



Figure 1: Passing lane markings



Figure 2: Bus Preferred Lane

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW (CONT.)

f. Bus Exclusive or Preferred Lanes are designated “priority” for public buses, school buses and taxicabs. All other vehicles, with the exception of motorcycles are required to move out of the lane immediately when a bus or taxi approaches from the rear.

g. 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 taxicab’s right of way.



Figure 3: Bus Exclusive Lane

h. 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.



Figure 4: DoDEA School Bus

NOTE: Between the hours of 0730-0900 and 1730-1900 on HWY 58, the far left lane is strictly used for Busses, Motorcycles, and Designated vehicles only.

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

(1) When the bus stops, do NOT proceed. All vehicles, in both directions must immediately stop until the bus moves or the bus driver signals vehicles to proceed.

(2) Pay close attention to pedestrians (children) disembarking from a bus to ensure they do not attempt to cross the street once the bus leaves.

a. Motorcycles are restricted to the far left side of the roadway on highway 58 from Naha Port to Kadena Circle as well as road 330 and 329 except within 30 meters (100 feet) of making a right turn.



Figure 5: Marines getting on The Green Line

2. Common “Rules of the Road”

a. Seat belts shall be worn (on/off base) by all personnel when a motor vehicle is in operation.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW (CONT.)

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

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

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

e. 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.



Figure 6: Okinawa Expressway Exit #6

3. Common Traffic Rules for Motor Vehicles on National Expressways and Exclusive Roadways

a. Motor vehicles entering the primary lane of travel on an Expressway must use the speed-acceleration lane to enter.

b. Motor vehicles intending to exit an expressway must travel in the lane nearest the exit and use the speed-deceleration lane if provided.

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

d. 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).

e. Should the need arise to stop a vehicle due to a 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 or maintenance reasons.

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

4. Speed Limits

a. Speed limit signs are depicted in kilometers per hour (km/h) rather than miles per hour (mph). For example, Figure 7 means 50 km/h, **NOT** 50 mph. Speedometers similar to Figure 8 on all Japanese, European, and U.S. modeled vehicles manufactured in Japan, depict km/h.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW (CONT.)

b. 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.

c. Other than Expressways, the maximum speed limit for motor vehicles operating off U.S. installations is as follows unless reduced speed limits are otherwise posted:



Figure 7: Speed Limit Sign

(1) The maximum speed is **60** km/h for all trucks less than 5 tons, and all passenger vehicles (including buses and motorcycles with 25cc engine displacement and higher).



Figure 8: Speedometer in km/h

(2) The maximum speed is **50** km/h for all trucks over 5 tons, all special vehicles (cement trucks, wreckers), and motorcycles or scooters under 251cc.

(3) The maximum speed is **30** km/h for any 2-wheeled vehicle under 50cc displacement.

d. 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 and/or road conditions.

e. When following another vehicle, Japanese law requires drivers maintain adequate separation distance to prevent colliding with the vehicle being followed in the event the vehicle makes an abrupt stop. The same is true when initiating a stop or turn. Drivers should avoid making sudden stops or last minute turns. A general rule 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, start counting. You should reach the same object by the time you say “3 or 4.” Note that highly congested urban areas will be difficult to apply this rule, so drivers must remain consistently vigilant when driving in these types of conditions.

5. **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.

a. 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 typical roadways. Extreme caution must be used any time an attempt is made to overtake or pass a slower vehicle.

b. 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

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW (CONT.)

roadways for example or when a vehicle in front of you is stopped or slowing its speed to make a right turn. Additional passing restrictions include:

(1) Passing a vehicle if the vehicle indicates or appears to be in the process of passing another vehicle (dual passing).

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

(3) Drivers shall not zigzag (cut) into 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.

(4) 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 Zones” as marked by a posted traffic sign.

6. Parking and Stopping

a. “No Parking Zones” and/or “No Stopping Zones” are designated by posted traffic signs as depicted in Appendix C. Figure 9 depicts a Safety Zone designation – these can be found in front of fire departments or police stations.

b. Drivers are not permitted to stop or park at posted areas along the roadway except under the following circumstances:

(1) When executing a temporary stop to clear the lane of travel for an emergency vehicle, as directed by a uniformed police officer, or to avert danger.

(2) Within 5 meters or less of a fire station, a fire hydrant, or a fire station’s fire truck entrance/exit road.

(3) Within 1 meter or less of a fire alarm.

(4) Temporary stops at designated intersections or crosswalks as required by law.

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

d. 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:



Figure 9: Safety Zone Designation

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW (CONT.)

(1) Within 3 meters or less of a motor vehicle entrance or exit that provides access to a main roadway (example: McDonald's entry/exit on Highway 58).

(2) Within 1 meter or less of a fire alarm.

(3) Within 5 meters or less of a roadway construction project.

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

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

e. 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 a sick or injured person.

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

g. 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 a manner the vehicle does not impede traffic.

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

i. 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.

j. 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.

7. Roadway Intersections

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

(1) Vehicles traveling on a priority road have the right-of-way.

(2) A vehicle approaching an intersection from left has the right-of-way over a vehicle approaching the intersection from the right.

JAPANESE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS OVERVIEW (CONT.)

b. 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.

c. 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 in close proximity to the intersection.

d. 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.

e. 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.

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

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

9. Use of Vehicle Horn. It is not acceptable to sound a vehicle's horn unless where required by law or in an effort to avert a hazardous situation.

10. Headlight use during Inclement Weather. Japanese traffic law does not require the use of headlights during periods of reduced visibility due to inclement weather. However, headlight use is **mandatory** aboard all U.S. installations and highly encouraged during periods of reduced visibility when driving off an installation.

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



Figure 10: Left Turn Permitted on Red



Figure 11: Sound Horn

CHAPTER 1: DRIVING PRIVILEGES

1. 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 driving 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 to or complete the test will result in the revocation of their driving privileges.

2. Suspension or Revocation of Driving Privileges

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

b. Commanding Officers may revoke a service-members driving privilege.

3. Restrictions on Use and Operation of Motor Vehicles

a. 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 in any of the following conditions:

(1) Undergoing maintenance or repair.

(2) Being shipped into or out of Japan.

(3) Stored in a parking lot or garage.

(4) Placed in temporary storage pending authorized disposition to a resident of Japan.

(5) Undergoing inspection and processing at a GOJ Land & Transportation Office (LTO).

(6) 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).

b. Daiko Taxi Service

(1) 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.

CHAPTER 1: DRIVING PRIVILEGES (CONT.)

(2) Insurance regulations require the SOFA member to ride in the Daiko taxi (not the SOFA member's own vehicle) as a passenger while a Daiko licensed operator drives the SOFA member's vehicle behind the taxi to the owner's final destination.

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

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

(1) Operators have a valid USFJ Form 4EJ for the type of motor vehicle operated.

(2) If 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.

(3) The vehicle is covered with appropriate insurance.

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

(1) Proof of vehicle ownership or registration as required by the issuing authority;

(2) A valid USFJ Form 4EJ, operator's permit supported by an official DoD Identification Card or passport with sofa stamp; and

(3) Proof of Japanese Compulsory Insurance (JCI) and property damage liability insurance (PDI).

Note: Per HQ USFJ INST 31-205, Chap 2, Figure 1. SOFA Status/Permanent Party Members are not authorized to operate SOFA plated vehicle with an International Driver's Permit (IDP).

e. Driving without a Driver's permit

(1) 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 with a fine and or punishment of up to 3 years confinement and no more than 500,000 yen.

(2) Anyone who gets in a vehicle while 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.

CHAPTER 2: ACCIDENT REPORTING



Figure 12: Typical car accident in Japan

1. Accidents and Accident Reporting Policy. 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 the most expeditious means.

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

b. 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 of the accident until military police arrive.

c. 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 date, and, upon request, show his/her operator's permit to any person injured in such accident or to the driver, occupant, or person attending any vehicle or other property damaged in such accident. The same information shall be provided to any law enforcement personnel at the scene of the accident or later investigating the accident.

d. Duty of Witness to Remain at Accident Scene

(1) Witnesses to an accident shall not depart the scene of a traffic accident until their identity has been furnished to law enforcement personnel.

(2) Witnesses to an accident shall give any assistance needed when requested by law enforcement personnel.

e. 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

CHAPTER 2: ACCIDENT REPORTING (CONT.)

involved in exchanging information and instruct SOFA personnel to report the accident to their insurance company.

f. The owner/operator of every vehicle involved in a traffic accident shall report the circumstances of surrounding their accident to their respective insurance company that issued a policy on the involved vehicle.

g. The report shall be made within 72 hours unless the owner and/or driver are hospitalized or otherwise incapable of doing so.

CHAPTER 3: RULES OF THE ROAD

1. Alcohol Standards

a. Driving Under the Influence/Driving While Intoxicated

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

(a) If a person's 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 as DUI.

(b) 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).

(2) 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 therein. This limitation shall not apply to collecting breath or urine specimens.

(3) When a person submits to a chemical test (Figure 13) or tests at the request of law enforcement personnel, full information concerning the test or tests shall be made available to that person and their commander or immediate supervisor.

(4) 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.



Figure 13: U.S. Standard Breathalyzer



Figure 14: Japanese Standard Breathalyzer (Kitagawa Balloon Test)

b. Japanese Standard

(1) Japanese police determine the degree of intoxication by use of the Kitagawa Balloon test (see Figure 14) which measures milligrams of alcohol per liter of expired breath. When a reading of 0.15 mg/l (the equivalent of .03% BAC) of expired breath is

CHAPTER 3: RULES OF THE ROAD (CONT.)

obtained, it shall be presumed for the purposes of prosecution in Japanese courts that the person was under the influence of alcohol.

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

2. General Provisions and Restrictions

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

b. 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.

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

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

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

(1) Drive in reverse direction unless such movement can be made safely and without interfering with other traffic;

(2) Drive in reverse direction upon any shoulder or roadway of any controlled access highway.

f. Operation of Vehicles Upon Approach of an Emergency Vehicle. Upon the 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.

g. Following Emergency Vehicles Prohibited. No vehicle driver shall follow any emergency vehicle making use of audible and/or visual signals closer than 500 feet (152 meters) or park within 500 feet (152 meters) of where an emergency vehicle has stopped to answer a call.

CHAPTER 3: RULES OF THE ROAD (CONT.)

h. 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.

3. Lane Usage

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

(1) A vehicle shall be driven only in the designated direction.

(2) 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.

(3) Drivers shall obey the directions of official traffic control devices installed to prohibit the changing of lanes or sections of roadway.

b. 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.

4. Motorcycles

a. Operating Motorcycles on Roadways

(1) All motorcycles are entitled to full use of a lane.

(2) 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.”

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

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

b. 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:

(1) A properly fastened (under the chin) protective helmet (DoT or SNELL Approved).



Figure 15: Parked Motorcycles

CHAPTER 3: RULES OF THE ROAD (CONT.)

(2) 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.

(3) Clothing must cover the upper torso and legs; “T” shirts and shorts are prohibited.

(4) Leather boots that cover the ankles; sneakers, “tennis” shoes, or other athletic-type footwear are prohibited.

(5) Full-fingered gloves.

(6) Reflective vest must be worn when operating a motorcycle aboard White Beach, Camp Shields, and Torii Station.

5. Pedestrians

a. The driver of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to any pedestrian utilizing a crosswalk.

b. No pedestrian shall suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close as to constitute an immediate hazard.

c. 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.

6. Cellphones, Headphones, or Other Listening Devices

a. Operating a vehicle and using a cell phone is strictly prohibited unless with a hands-free device.

(1) Placing a cell phone on speaker does not necessitate the use of a hands free device.

(2) 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 not coming into or out of a curve. Hazard flashing lights must be administered as well.

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

7. Illegal Parking Sticker

a. 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 by the Public Safety Commission.






CHAPTER 3: RULES OF THE ROAD (CONT.)

b. Do not damage, tear, or remove the affixed Illegal Parking Sticker until the fine has been paid. The vehicle operator must immediately go to the nearest Police Station to pay. Any delay in paying the fine may cause additional fines to be assessed or driving privileges suspended.



Figure 16: Illegal Parking Sticker

8. Driver's Marks. The following symbols must be affixed to a vehicle as deemed by licensing authority:






















<p style="text-align: center;">NEW DRIVER</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">This symbol identifies a driver as a NEW DRIVER having one year or less of driving experience.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ELDERLY DRIVER</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">These symbols identify the driver as being over the age of 70 years of age.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">HEARING IMPAIRED</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">This symbol identifies the driver as being hearing impaired. This driver must install an oversize rear view mirror to reduce the size of blind spots.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">HANDICAPPED</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Old Symbol</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>New Symbol</p>  </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Handicapped driver/passenger</p>

9. Seat Belt and Child Restraint Systems

a. Seat Belts are mandatory for all personnel inside a vehicle when the vehicle is operational; on and off base.

b. Child seats are mandatory for all children under the age of six years of age according to Japanese Traffic Law. When operating a vehicle on-base, children four years of age or younger or under 45 pounds of weight must be affixed to a child seat.



Appendix A: Japanese Traffic Signs and Road Markings

 Stop	 Slow	 Closed to Vehicles & Pedestrians	 Closed to all Vehicles	 Do Not Enter	 Closed to Vehicles & Motorcycles	 Road Closed to Large Sized Trucks & Special Duty Vehicles
 Road Closed to All Vehicles Except Two Wheeled Vehicles	 Closed to Light Vehicles Except Bicycles	 Closed to Large Passenger Vehicles	 No Right Turn	 No Passing	 No U-Turn	 No Two Step Turns (Turn Normally)
 Closed to Two Wheeled Vehicles	 Closed to Vehicles with Hazardous Cargo	  Closed to Trucks Over 3 Tons	 Closed to Bicycles	 No Pedestrian Crossing	 Closed to Pedestrians	



PARKING SIGNS

 NO PARKING No parking at any time, may stop for up to 5 minutes for loading and unloading provided a driver is present at all times	 No Parking or Stopping Anytime
--	--

SPEED LIMIT SIGNS

 Minimum Speed	 Maximum Speed
--	--

SIZE & WEIGHT LIMIT SIGNS

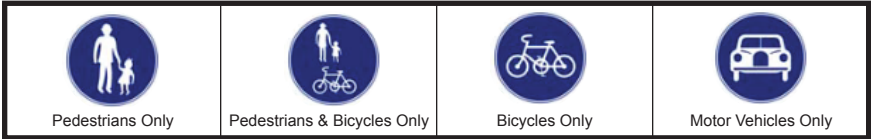
 Maximum Width in Meters	 Maximum Weight in Tons	 Maximum Height in Meters
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Appendix A: Japanese Traffic Signs and Road Markings

Parking Permitted Signs



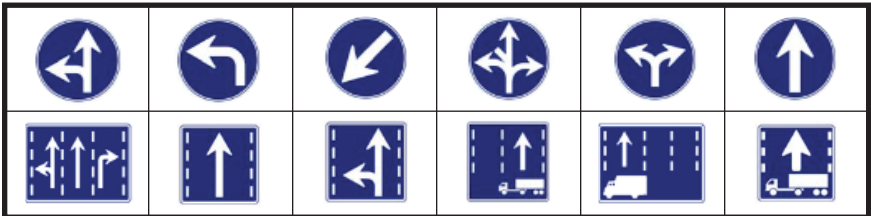
Restricted Paths & Roadways



Common Roadway Signs



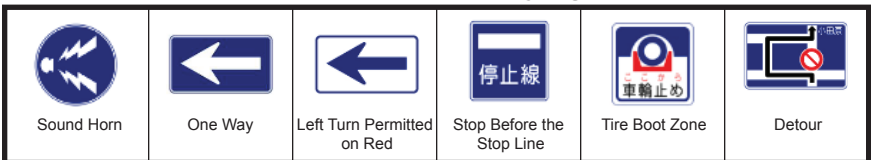
Direction Indicators




























Common Crosswalk Signs



Miscellaneous Roadway Signs












Appendix A: Japanese Traffic Signs and Road Markings

				
Curve Ahead	Double Curve Ahead	Curve Ahead	Sharp Curve Ahead	Windy Road (Curve)
				
Y - Intersection Ahead	4-Way Intersection Ahead	T - Intersection Ahead	T - Intersection Ahead	Merge
				
Two-Way Traffic	Roadway Narrows	Number of Lanes Reduced	Traffic Signal Ahead	Caution
				
Prevailing Side Wind	Downgrade or Decline	Upgrade or Incline	Slippery Road	School Zone
				
Road Construction	Rotary	Fallen Rock Zone	Bumps or Bumpy Road	Animal Crossing (Okinawa = Boar)


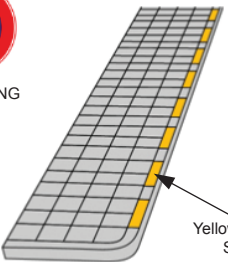

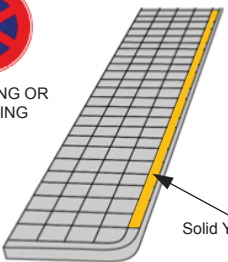
Appendix A: Japanese Traffic Signs and Road Markings





AUXILLARY SIGNS

RED arrows apply to the sign above it

 START of a control	 END of a control	 WITHIN a control	 END of a control (applies to the sign below it)	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">8-20</div> Hours Required
 Start of "No Parking" from 0800 to 2000	 End of "No Parking" from 0800 to 2000	 Within the "No Parking" from 0800 to 2000	 END of "NO Parking" from 0800 to 2000	 No U-Turns from 0800 to 2000

STREET MARKINGS

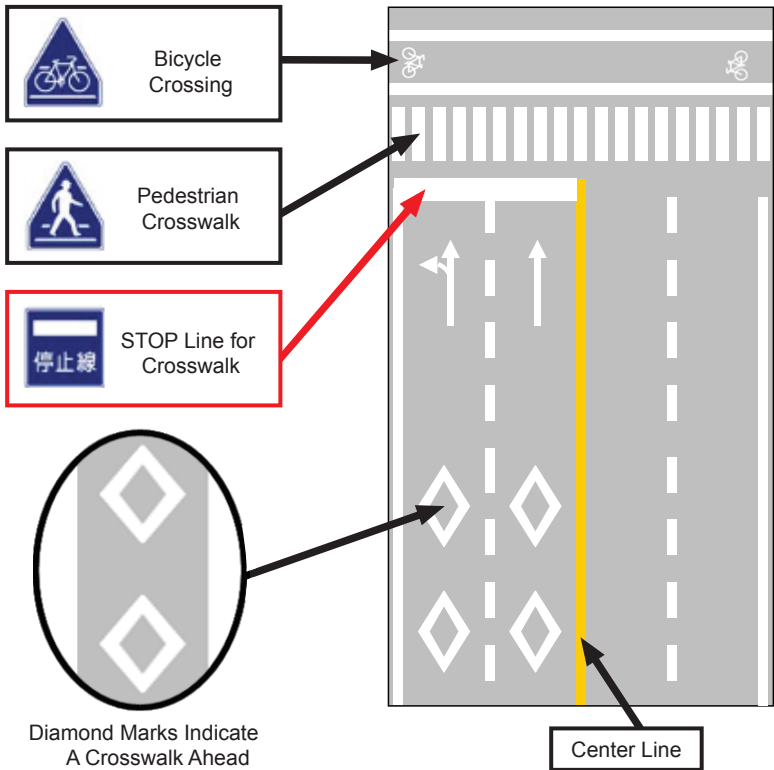
Yellow dashed stripes painted on the curb means "NO PARKING" is allowed	A solid yellow strip painted on the curb means "NO PARKING or STOPPING" at any time
 NO PARKING  Yellow Dashed Stripes	 NO PARKING OR STOPPING  Solid Yellow Stripe

 End of 50 km/h zone	 End of "No U-Turn"	 No U-Turn from 0800-2000	 Maximum Speed 30 km/h
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Appendix A: Japanese Traffic Signs and Road Markings

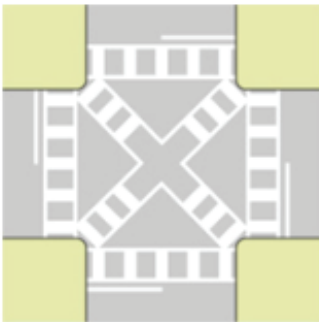
 <p>Emergency Parking</p>	 <p>Emergency Telephone</p>	 <p>Destination & Direction</p>	 <p>Designated Lane for Destination</p>
 <p>Destination & Direction</p>	 <p>Parking Area</p>	 <p>Rest Area/Parking Fuel Stand, Etc..</p>	 <p>Expressway Entrance</p>
 <p>Destination & Direction</p>	 <p>Destination & Distance</p>	 <p>Slower Traffic Keep Left</p>	 <p>National Route Marker & Highway Signs</p>
 <p>Expressway Exit</p>			

Appendix A: Japanese Traffic Signs and Road Markings



Multiple Crosswalks

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



Safety Zone

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







**This handbook is a product of the Installation Safety Office (ISO). All questions
Or concerns regarding its content can be addressed to the Director, ISO at
DSN: 315-645-3806**