

E01

Trusted Renting Support Business

Apartment Search Guidebook



English

Introduction

The Promotion Council for Ansin-chintai Housing promotes the smooth and stable tenancy of foreigners and others in private rental housing through the expansion of the Trusted Renting Support Business.

This guidebook contains the required basic knowledge and much useful information that you will need to look for rental housing in Japan.

Japanese rental agreements have many unique features that differ from those in your country. Please read this guidebook before beginning to look for rental housing.

This will help you be successful in finding rental housing in Japan and with building a good relationship with your neighbors after moving into your new rental housing.

We support you in your effort to find rental housing that meets your desired conditions.

Promotion Council for Ansin-chintai Housing

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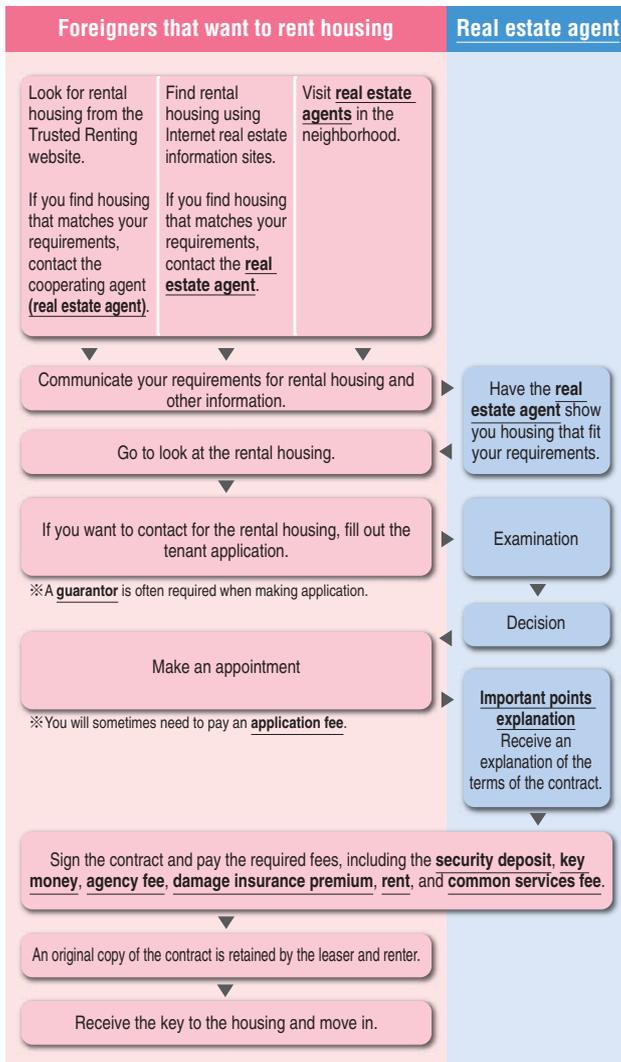
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※The **bold and underlined words** are explained in “**7** Real Estate Terms You Should Know When Renting Housing” on page E19.

From Looking for Rental Housing to Moving In

1 Procedures and Contract Flow When Renting Housing

Flow When Renting Housing



1 How to Look for Rental Housing

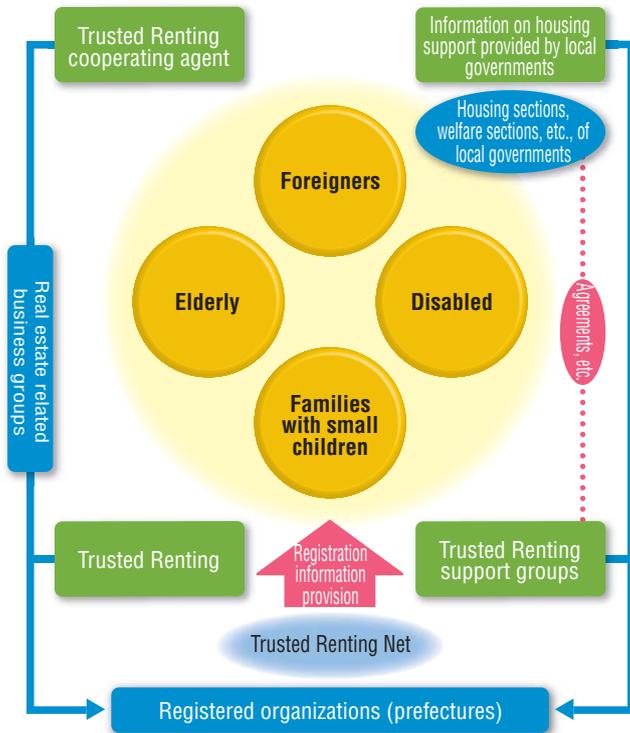
- There is a website called “Trusted Renting Net” that provides information on rental housing that accepts foreigners and other tenants and that posts information about **real estate agents** that refer or act as agents for housing. Try using this website. “Trusted Renting Net” is written in Japanese, so view it together with someone who understands Japanese.

Trusted Renting Support Business

There seems to be a tendency for some private rental housing to decline tenancy to the elderly, the disabled, foreigners, and families with small children to avoid trouble. To deal with this situation, the Trusted Renting Support Business is being promoted to create a system for providing information on rental housing that accepts foreigners and others so that the elderly, disabled, foreigners, and families with small children can find private rental housing without worry.

“Trusted Renting Net”:

- Features “Trusted Renting Rental Housing” that is registered by prefecture that accepts the elderly, disabled, foreigners, and families with small children.
- Features “Trusted Renting Housing Partner Agencies” that are registered by prefecture and that are **real estate agents** that introduce rental housing to foreigners and others and help them with the move-in procedures.
- Features information on residency support services provided by “Trusted Renting Support Groups” (NPOs, social welfare companies, etc) that are registered by prefecture and that provide move-in support for foreigners and others.



- You can also look for rental housing on Internet real estate sites.



- If you cannot acquire the required information from websites, etc., go to local **real estate agents** and tell them the requirements for the housing you are seeking and have them introduce housing to you. **Real estate agents** post rental housing information so that it can be viewed from outside their offices. Looking at the postings will give you an idea about the **rents** in the area you want to live in.
- If you are a foreign student, ask at the section in charge of students at your school if the school has student housing information.

2 Visit a **real estate agent**

- When visiting a **real estate agent**, dress appropriately to give a good first impression to the agent.
- If you do not speak Japanese well, bring someone who does speak Japanese well with you when you visit a **real estate agent**.

3 Your housing requirements

- Be sure to clearly state your housing requirements, such as the closest train station, **rent**, size, and furnishings and equipment.
 - It would be good to fill out the Requirements Check Sheet on page E24-25 in advance and show it to a **real estate agent**.

4 Things you will be asked by a **real estate agent**

- Generally, a **real estate agent** will ask you about the following.
- Your name, occupation, **co-occupants** (number of people), income, Japanese language capability, if you have a **guarantor**, personal identification, the reason you are looking for housing, etc.

5 Viewing the housing

- If you find housing that matches your requirements, go and look at it. You can view housing free of charge. If you look at housing and do not like it, you can tell the **real estate agent** it does not interest you.

- Sometimes the housing floor layout will differ from that actual housing, so be sure to check things carefully when you view the housing.
- In addition to the housing, also check the surrounding environment and the convenience. Ask where are the train stations and bus stops, supermarkets and convenience stores, post office, banks, hospitals, parks, etc.

6 Applying to rent the housing

- If you like housing, apply to rent it. The **real estate agent** and landlord will conduct a tenancy examination and if you pass the examination, you can form a rental agreement and move in.
- Generally, a **guarantor** is required to form a rental agreement. If you do not have a **guarantor**, you may be able to use a rent liability guarantee service, such as a **rent liability guarantee company**. Ask the **real estate agent** about this.

7 Important points explanation

- Before signing the rental agreement, have the **real estate agent** explain the important rental agreement points to you. If there is something you do not understand, then ask questions until you understand it well.



8 Rental agreement

- When you rent housing, you will form a rental agreement. The rental agreement is a document that specifies the promises between the landlord and the renter. Read the terms of the rental agreement, have them explained to you, and sign the agreement only after you understand the terms well. Signing the rental agreement means that you understand its terms and promise to observe them. If a **real estate agent** is acting as an intermediary, you will be charged an **agency fee**.
 - Before signing the rental agreement, check the following items when receiving the **important points explanation**, etc.
 - Whether the rental agreement is a **regular rental agreement** or a **lease agreement**.
 - Ask about the amount of the **security deposit**, **key money**, etc., required at contract signing, and the amount of the **Shikibiki(non-refundable restoration fee)** if any.
 - For a **regular rental agreement**, ask if there is an **agreement renewal fee**, and if there is, how much it is.
 - Can the housing be redecorated and is co-occupancy by anyone other than the tenants prohibited?
 - What are the **original condition restoration** conditions?
- Check on the cost of **original condition restoration** at the time of vacating to prevent trouble from arising.

2 Documents and Fees Required When Making a Contract

Item	Description
Documents required when making a rental agreement	Certificate of Registered Items in the Foreign Resident Registry, passport, proof of earnings, student registration certificate, etc. Guarantor's proof of earnings and seal registration certificate
Payments required when making a rental agreement	Security deposit, key money, agency fee, damage insurance premium, rent, common service fee , etc. These vary by region, but a rule of thumb is an amount equivalent to 4 to 7 months rent . Generally, payment is made in cash or by bank transfer.

3 Move-in Procedures

1 Receiving the key

- You will be given the key to the housing after the rental agreement is signed. This key must be returned to the landlord at the end of the contract period, so be careful not to lose it.
- When receiving the key, if possible, have the **real estate agent** accompany you to check the condition of the housing and it is a good idea to create a checklist. Drawing a simple floor layout and marking the damaged or dirty areas and attaching dated photographs are useful in avoiding trouble in the future. Also be sure to check that all furnishings and equipment operate properly.
- You must not make copies of keys without permission. You must obtain permission from the landlord first.

2 Applying for electricity, gas, and water

- To apply for electricity, write your name, address, and usage start date on the postcard attached to the breaker and mail it in.
- For gas, contact a gas company ahead of time and request that the gas be turned on before the move-in date. You must be present when the gas is turned on.
- For water, contact the section in charge of waterworks at your local government office and follow the procedure for having the water turned on. Write your name, address, and usage start date on the provided postcard and mail it in.

3 Greeting the neighbors

- In Japan, it is the custom when one moves into a new location to go around the neighbors and people living on the floors above and below you to introduce yourself. Give your name and a simple self-introduction.
- It is convenient to be acquainted with each other. Take care on a daily basis to greet people when you meet them.



4 Neighborhood association/residents' association

- In Japan, there is usually a residents' organization called either the "neighborhood association" (chonaikai) or "residents' association" (jichikai).
- The chonaikai or jichikai passes around circulars (a message clipboard with information from the city hall, healthcare center, and other organizations that is circulated in order among the association members), conducts anti-crime activities and disaster preparedness drills, and holds festivals and other events where neighbors can get together.
- The chonaikai or jichikai activities are funded by the membership fees paid by the residents.

4 Post-Move-in Residency Rules

1 Setting out the garbage

- The way for taking out the garbage differs depending on the neighborhood in which you live (city, ward, town, or village). The day and time period when the garbage is to be set out is decided, so when you move in ask the **real estate agent**, the neighbors, or the local government office about the set day and time.
- If you do not set out the garbage at the appointed time, it will not be collected even if you separate it properly, and this will often cause trouble with the neighbors. Be especially careful to observe the appointed day and time.
- Items that need to be checked
 - Days and time the garbage is to be set out
 - Separation of recyclable waste (bottles, cans, PET plastic bottles, newspapers, etc.)
 - Location where the garbage is to be set out
 - Separation of burnable and non-burnable garbage
 - How to dispose of large items, etc.



- In cities, wards, towns, or villages with many foreign residents, there may be pamphlets with illustrations in foreign languages that explain how to put out the garbage. Ask at the local government office or the waste collection office.

2 Caution regarding noise

- In multi-family dwellings, sound travels easily to the neighbors or to the floors above and below, so be careful not to be noisy especially late at night or early in the morning.
- For example, loud voices, parties, televisions and stereos, musical instruments, vacuum cleaners and washing machines, the sound of children running around, slamming of doors, taking a bath at night, and similar actions can often be noisy, so be careful not to disturb the neighbors.



3 How to use the housing

- Japan is very humid (especially in the summer time), so take care to air out the inside of the housing. If condensation forms, wipe it off. Leaving condensation could cause mold and mildew to form and you will be held responsible for this.
- Putting nails in the walls of the housing or painting it are often prohibited, so be sure to check what is prohibited by the rental agreement.
- Living with people other than those stated in the rental agreement or sub-leasing the housing to another party are infractions of the rental agreement.

4 Using the kitchen

- Do not wash grease or food scraps down the sink drain. Absorb the grease with newspaper or other material and put it in the burnable garbage.
- When cooking generates strong smells or smoke, turn on the exhaust fan and make sure the smell does not linger in the housing.

5 Using the bathroom and toilet

- Do not wash hair and other matter down the bathroom drain.
- Do not flush anything but toilet paper down the toilet.
- You will cause your neighbors trouble if a drain or toilet becomes plugged and overflow. If you cause damage to housing below yours, you will be responsible for paying for it.

6 Using common service areas and balconies

- In multi-family dwellings, the halls, stairs, and other locations outside of your housing are common service areas. Do not place garbage or personal property in these areas. These common service areas are also used as escape routes in times of emergency.
- Balconies might also be used as escape routes in times of emergency. Do not block the escape routes, etc., with belongings.



5 Moving (Vacating) Procedures

1 Moving notice

- When moving out, notify the landlord or real estate agent within the period specified in the rental agreement (usually 1 to 2 months in advance) that you will be terminating the rental agreement (termination notice).

2 Turning off electricity, gas, and water

- At least 1 week before moving out, notify the electric power company, gas company, and section in charge of waterworks at your local government office to have the services turned off.
- Staff from the electric power company, gas company, and section in charge of waterworks at your local government office will come to the housing on the move-out day to have you complete the turn-off procedures. You will be charged for the service provided up to that day.

3 Telephone and Internet procedures

- For fixed telephone lines, contact the telephone company and complete the moving procedures.
- For mobile telephones, notify the contracting telephone company of your change of address.
- For the Internet, notify the contracting provider of your change of address, etc.

4 Postal matter procedures

- Go to the post office and complete procedures for having your mail forwarded. If you do this, mail going to your former address will be sent to the new address for a set period of time (within Japan, etc).

5 Requesting to have large garbage items picked up

- To dispose of large garbage items, such as furniture, or large quantities of garbage, contract the local government office or waste collection office ahead of time and make arrangements to have the material disposed of.
- When the collection date will be after the move-out, consult the landlord or property manager about what to do.

6 Removing belongings

- Finish your move-out during the daytime. Moving out at night will disturb your neighbors, so do not do it.
- Remove all of your belongings from the housing and clean it well. Do not leave any garbage behind.

7 Returning the key and vacating the premises

- Return the key when vacating the premises.
- Original condition restoration means repairing areas of the housing you have broken or damaged before vacating the housing. The real estate agent or landlord will accompany you for an inspection of the housing to compare the condition of the housing and the furnishings and equipment with that at the time of move-in to check how much original condition restoration, etc., is required.

8 Security deposit settlement

- In principle, the security deposit will be returned after vacating the housing. However, if there are expenses for original condition restoration or to dispose of belongings left on the housing, etc., such expenses will be subtracted from the security deposit. If the cost of original condition restoration exceeds that amount of the security deposit, you must pay the difference.

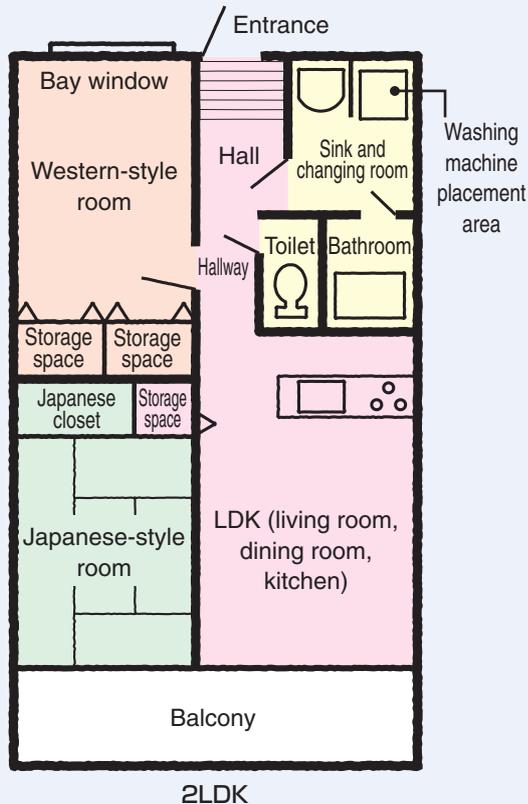
6 Rental Housing Types and How to Read the Floor Layouts, etc.

1 Difference between an apa-to and a manshon

- An apa-to is a multi-family dwelling that generally is low-rise building or wooden or light steel frame construction. These are also called haitsu or ko-po.
- A manshon is generally a multi-family dwelling of reinforced concrete construction.

2 Reading floor layouts

- In Japan, floor layouts are expressed using such terms as “2LDK.”
- The “L” stands for living room, the “D” for dining room, and the “K” for kitchen. “DK” means one room jointly serves as the dining room and kitchen. “LDK” means one room jointly serves as the living room, dining room, and kitchen.
- If there is a number, such as “1” or “2” in front, such as “1DK” or “2LDK,” it shows the number of independent rooms. For example, “2LDK” means there are 2 independent rooms in addition to the LDK.



※This is an example floor layout.

3 Room size units (Jo, Tsubo)

- The units used to show the size of a residence include “Jo” and “Tsubo,” which are unique to Japan, in addition to square meters (m²).
- “Jo” (帖) is the size of one tatami mat and is approximately 180 cm x 90 cm (there are some tatami mats that are smaller than this). This unit is used to show the size of a room. It is also written as (畳).
- “Tsubo” (坪) is used to express the size of land. 1 tsubo is approximately 3.3m².

4 Difference between Japanese-style (和室) and Western-style (洋室) rooms

- (和室) is a Japanese-style room with tatami mats on the floor.
- (洋室) is a room with flooring or carpet on the floor.

5 Bathrooms in Japan

- Generally, bathrooms in Japan have a separate washing area from the bathtub.
- The bathtub is only used to hold hot water and washing of the hair or body is done outside of the bathtub in the washing area. First rinse off all of the shampoo and soap before soaking in the bathtub.
- If more than one person will take a bath, the hot water in the bathtub is not drained and can be used as is for the next person.



6 Japanese-style toilets

- When using a Japanese-style toilet, squat facing the doomed part.



7 Wearing shoes in the house is prohibited

- Japanese houses have a step up from the entrance to the hall or room. Shoes are removed in the entrance before entering the rest of the house. In Japan, people sit directly on the floor or on a cushion placed on the floor. So be sure to remove your shoes in the entrance. You must not enter the rest of the house with your shoes on.



8 Bicycle parking space

- Line up your bicycle in an orderly fashion in the designated area, such as a bicycle parking space. When there are rules, such as affixing a special sticker to the bicycle, these rules must be followed. For automobiles, a parking space must be acquired (there is often a charge for parking spaces). You must not park in even empty spaces in a parking area unless you have been given the right to park there (rented the space, etc).

7 Real Estate Terms You Should Know When Renting Housing

[Real Estate Agent]

This is an agent that serves as the landlord's agent for renting housing and that buys and sells real estate.

[Guarantor]

This is a person who pays unpaid rent or unpaid repair costs after you vacate rental housing when you do not/cannot make the payment yourself. A guarantor is required when applying to rent rental housing. Guarantors must have an income that exceeds a certain level.

[Application Fee]

This is money that is paid to the real estate agent when reserving a rental agreement. Check if the application fee is returned if a rental agreement is not formed.

[Important Points Explanation]

When a real estate agent is acting as the agent for rental housing, the real estate agent will explain the important points of the rental agreement to the renter (potential renter) before the rental agreement is signed and an important points explanation sheet will be given to the renter. The important points regarding the state of equipment, handling of the security deposit, etc., will be explained, so listen carefully and ask questions when you do not understand something.

[Security Deposit (Guarantee Money)]

The security deposit is deposited with the landlord at the time the rental agreement is signed as a safeguard against non-payment of rent or repairs required when the rental housing is vacated. As a guideline this is usually about the equivalent of 2 months rent. Any remaining security deposit after settle of expenses at the time the rental housing is vacated is returned to you. In some areas the security deposit is called guarantee money. The guarantee money is often the equivalent of 6 months rent.

[Key Money]

This is money that is paid to the landlord at the rental agreement signing. Key money is often required in the Kanto Region and is usually 1 or 2 months rent. Key money is not returned. Recently there is some rental housing that does not require key money to rent.

[Agency Fee]

This is money that is paid as a fee to the real estate agent and is set within 1 month rent.

[Damage Insurance Premium]

It is common at rental agreement signing to acquire damage insurance coverage to protect against fire or water damage caused by the tenant.

[Rent]

This is the charge for renting the housing, and generally the rent for the current month is due at the end of the previous month. If you move into or out of housing after the first day of the month, the rent for that month in principle will be prorated.

[Common Service Fee (Management Fee)]

This is money that covers the cost of electricity used or cleaning fees, etc., for spaces used in common by the tenants, such as stairways and hallways. In Japan, you pay a common service fee (or management fee) that is separate from the rent. This is generally paid for the current month together with the rent at the end of the previous month.

[Co-occupants]

If there will be co-occupants in the rental housing, this must be stated to the landlord when the rental agreement is being formed. If this is not stated and you allow co-occupants without permission, you could be evicted from the housing.

[Rent Liability Guarantee Company]

A rent liability guarantee company is a company that guarantees to pay the rent to the landlord in the event that you do not pay the rent. To use such a company, you must pay a set guarantee fee (this is often 35% to 50% of one month's rent paid in advance as the guarantee fee for 2 years). However, this is not insurance. The guarantee company will bill you for the rent that it paid for you.

[Regular Rental Agreement]

A regular rental agreement is the type of rental agreement generally used in Japan. The landlord cannot refuse to renew the agreement at the end of the agreement period without due cause. In other words, the contract is automatically renewed even if there is no renewal agreement.

[Lease Agreement]

A lease agreement is a rental agreement that covers a specified contract period and ends at the end of the contract period without being renewed. A new contract can be made by agreement between the landlord and renter.

[Non-refundable Restoration Fee]

The non-refundable restoration fee is a contract method that sets in advance the amount of the portion of the security deposit or guarantee money that will not be returned when the housing is vacated. This is often required in the Tokai Region, Kansai Region, and Kyushu.

[Renewal Fee]

This is money paid to the landlord by the renter when the rental agreement is renewed to continue the agreement and is specified in a special term in the rental agreement. The contract period is normally 2 years.

[Original Condition Restoration]

You must pay the expense incurred to restore the rental housing to its original conditions when it has been damaged or dirtied willfully, negligently, or carelessly by you. This is called the original condition restoration fee and is subtracted from the security deposit when the housing is vacated. Take care to keep the housing clean and in good repair.

[Termination Notice]

To terminate the rental agreement before the end of the agreement period, you must inform the landlord or real estate agent of your intent to terminate by applying in advance (the advance period requirement is stated in the rental agreement and is usually 1 or 2 months).

Information Useful for Renting Housing

Foreigner Residency Support

① Council of Local Authorities and International Relations [Multilingual Living Information Page]

Information necessary for renting a property is provided in Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Thai. There are plans to also add information in French, German, and Russian.

<http://www.clair.or.jp/tagengo/>

② Sumasen Kanagawa Foreigner Living Support Center

Offers various consultations and interpreting related to housing to foreigners in English, Chinese, Cantonese, Korean, Spanish, and Portuguese. Support for finding rental housing is also provided.

☎045-228-1752

<http://www.sumasen.com/>

③ Saitama Prefecture Resident Living Department International Section

[Multicultural Real Estate Agents System]

Based on recommendations from real estate industry groups, the real estate transaction companies within Saitama Prefecture that are registered as “Multicultural Real Estate Agents” will consult free of charge with foreigners looking for rental housing to support their search for properties.

A list of these multicultural real estate agents is provided on the following website.

☎048-830-2717

<http://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/A12/BF00/sumaisupport.htm>

④ “Consultation for Foreigners” of local governments and international exchange associations

Consultation regarding housing is provided, so be sure to ask them.

Exchange Student/Regular Student Residence Support

① Japan Educational Exchanges and Services [Comprehensive Renter’s Insurance for Foreign Students Studying in Japan]

This is a support system that makes it easier for exchange students and regular students to find a guarantor.

☎03-5454-5275

<http://www.jees.or.jp/crifs/index.htm>

※The same support system is also provided in Miyagi Prefecture and Ishikawa Prefecture.

◆ Miyagi International Association [Miyagi Prefecture Exchange Student Housing Guarantor Support Program]

☎022-275-3796

<http://www.h5.dion.ne.jp/~mia/>

② Chiba International Center [Foreign Student Housing Advisor System]

This system gives referrals to real estate agents that support the finding of rental housing by exchange students and regular students in Chiba Prefecture. In addition, living information is provided in Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean.

☎043-297-0245

<http://www.mcic.or.jp/sodan/juukyo-advisor.html>

③ Kyoto City International Foundation [Housing Search Site HOUSE Navi]

This Internet site provides housing search information for the Kyoto area in Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, and Spanish.

Events like the “Exchange Student ‘Fureai’ Housing Fair” are also held to introduce properties in cooperation with other network organizations.

☎075-752-3010

<http://house.kcif.or.jp/>

Requirements Check Sheet

Fill in the bold border areas of this “Requirements Check Sheet” and show it to the real estate agent.

Foreigner

I am looking for rental housing with the following conditions.

① Preferred rent	¥ _____ ~ ¥ _____
② Preferred area	Close to (_____) station Within (_____) minutes walk from station
③ Type of property	<input type="checkbox"/> Apa-to <input type="checkbox"/> Manshon <input type="checkbox"/> House
④ Apartment on what floor	<input type="checkbox"/> 2nd floor or higher <input type="checkbox"/> Any floor is fine
⑤ Property floor space	(_____)m ² or more
⑥ Floor layout	<input type="checkbox"/> Studio <input type="checkbox"/> Other than studio Separate rooms (_____) rooms Joint rooms <input type="checkbox"/> K <input type="checkbox"/> DK <input type="checkbox"/> LDK Room type <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese <input type="checkbox"/> Western <input type="checkbox"/> No preference
⑦ Toilet	<input type="checkbox"/> Western <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese
⑧ Bath	<input type="checkbox"/> With bath <input type="checkbox"/> Can be without bath
⑨ Air conditioner	<input type="checkbox"/> With air conditioner <input type="checkbox"/> Can be without air conditioner
⑩ Number of occupants	(_____) people <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Other
⑪ Guarantor	<input type="checkbox"/> Have <input type="checkbox"/> Want to use guarantee company <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have
⑫ Desired move-in date	From year (_____) month (_____) day (_____) ※My planned period of stay is until (_____) year (_____) month.
⑬ Payments to be made at contract signing	I can prepare about ¥ _____.

Foreigner

My profile is as follows.

① What is your occupation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Company employee <input type="checkbox"/> Factory worker <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed <input type="checkbox"/> Clerk <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Other
② What is your form of employment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular employee <input type="checkbox"/> Contract employee <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary service employee <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time employee <input type="checkbox"/> Other
③ What is your Japanese speaking ability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Daily conversation <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
④ Can you read Japanese?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Hiragana is OK <input type="checkbox"/> No

Real Estate Agent

- Look at the fliers and if you see a housing you like, come back with a person who speaks Japanese.
- Please read the brochure again carefully.
- We don't currently have any housing that fit your needs.
- We do not have a housing that fits your needs.

The market rate rent for housing of the size and area you prefer is

¥ _____ .

I suggest you rethink your preferred conditions.

Name

Address

 Telephone No. ()

 Mobile telephone number ()

Passport No.

Name of place of
employment or school

Location

 Telephone No. ()

Emergency contact in Japan

Name

 Telephone No. ()

Emergency contact in home country

Name

 Telephone No. ()
