

Two months
before the trip

One month
before the trip

One week
before the trip

Departure!!

Arrival
in Hokkaido!!



Chapter 3 Traffic rules and quick tips

3-1. Before driving in Hokkaido	24
3-2. Traffic rules in Japan you need to know	25
3-3. Use expressways!	33
3-4. How to use gas stations	35
3-5. Be careful on snowy roads!	37

3-1. Before driving in Hokkaido

In the event of a car accident, where you injure a third party or damage property, the duty and responsibility for this incident rests on your shoulders. The driver may be prosecuted on charges of dangerous driving resulting in injury or death as well as corporate manslaughter, both which carry serious criminal penalties. Appropriate knowledge and orderly behavior are essential to avoid causing traffic accidents.

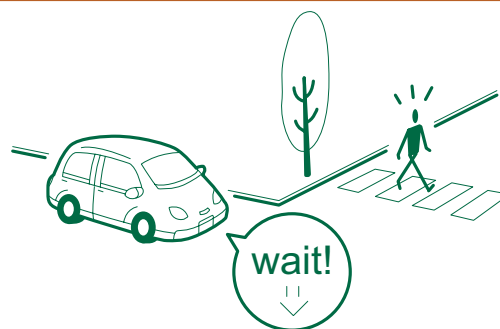


Quick Tip

Understand the important points of Japanese traffic rules.

Yield to pedestrians

In Japan, a driver must pay careful attention to pedestrians when driving a car. If a pedestrian is injured, the driver is primarily at fault for not avoiding the danger. When turning at intersections, drivers must stop to allow pedestrians to cross before going ahead.

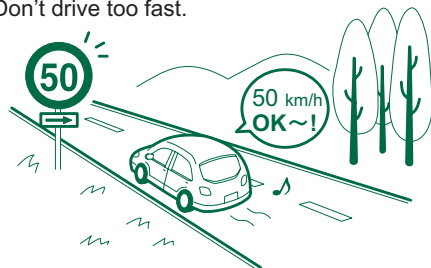


Quick Tip

Learn carefully about driving conditions unique to Hokkaido.

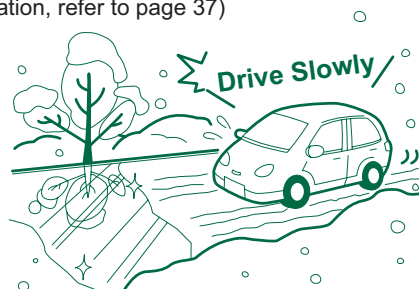
The number of deaths due to traffic accidents is high in Hokkaido!

Although the total number of traffic fatalities has recently decreased in Hokkaido, 2008 witnessed 228 traffic accident fatalities, making it the third ranking worst place in the nation – that's worse than Tokyo! Since Hokkaido has many long and wide roads, drivers are apt to drive too fast. This occurs particularly on roads with fewer cars, but the excessive speeds are leading to traffic accidents that involve death. Don't drive too fast.



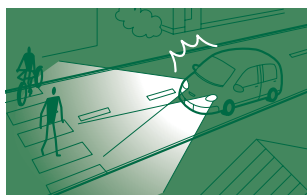
Skills are required for driving on snowy roads! (November – April)

Hokkaido is one of the world's top-class snow-covered regions. It is difficult to drive on winter roads because they are slippery, covered with snow and there can be near-whiteout conditions. You must acquire the appropriate knowledge and take the necessary measures to prevent traffic accidents. Useful ideas are also introduced in this handbook. (For further information, refer to page 37)



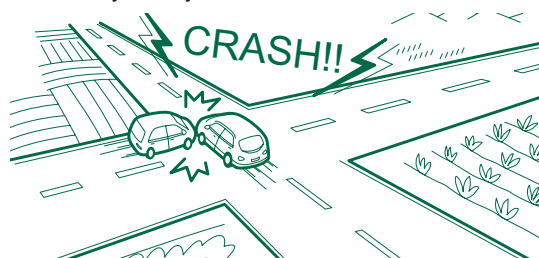
Be careful when driving a car at night!

Roads far from towns have few streetlights and are very dark. In the darkness, it may take you longer to see pedestrians and bicycles, and also the number of wild animals near the roads is much higher. Special care is required for drivers who are used to only driving on well-lit roads in towns. Since the sun sets earlier during autumn and winter, plan your driving trip as far as possible free from time constraints.



Lots of accidents in the countryside!

Hokkaido witnesses many traffic accidents at intersections where there are no traffic lights. Accidents in the countryside most often become fatal accidents. Maintain the speed limits and make sure you check both right and left before crossing at any intersections to make sure you stay safe.



3-2. Traffic rules in Japan you need to know

Although travelers from South Korea and Taiwan may be afraid of driving on the left in Japan at first, they will gradually get used to doing so when driving on ordinary roads. However, the driver may slip back into their normal habit at a critical moment, so it is important to remain calm but cautious while driving.

- 1 Left-hand traffic!**
Japan basically has a left-hand traffic system.
 - 2 Right-turning cars must wait!**
Oncoming cars driving straight and turning left have right of way in principle. Right-turning cars must wait for oncoming vehicles to go through/past before turning.
 - 3 Never fail to stop when a traffic light is red.**
When a traffic signal is red, not only cars going straight but also ones turning left must stop.
 - 4 Obey arrow traffic lights.**
Although a traffic light is red, cars which are turning in the direction of a green arrow traffic signal may make a turn.
- 26**
-
- 5 Always pay attention to speed limits! Legal speed limit is 60 km/h!**
Speed limits on roads without traffic signs are 60 km/h on public roads and 100 km/h on expressways.
 - 6 Pay attention to no-overtaking zones!**
Do not overtake in the no-overtaking zones.
 - 7 Bring your car to a complete stop at stop signs and in front of train crossings!**
In Japan, you must stop your car at stop signs, and it is a traffic violation not to stop completely. Drivers must also stop in front of train crossings.
- 27**
-
- 8 Watch the traffic light in front carefully, and do not start to move before the traffic light turns green!**
There are traffic lights on busy streets, which stay green for longer than usual. In addition, there are a number of unique intersections which are set up so that pedestrians and vehicles are never crossing at the same time as the traffic signals for pedestrians only come on when all vehicles are stopped.
 - 9 Never drink and drive!**
Not drinking and driving is obvious but please note that sober passengers who travel with a driver who has been drinking, and who may have encouraged the driver to drink will also be punished.
- 28**

The basic points for driving in Japan are introduced here. Exclamation marks have been used for points which may differ greatly from the rules in travelers' own countries.

① Left-hand traffic!

Roads in Japan use a left-hand traffic system. Since right-turning cars may be waiting in the right hand lane of a two-lane road, keep driving in the left lane if you do not intend to turn right. Don't forget to use your indicators when changing lanes so that cars behind know your intentions.

Pay attention to the differences from your own country.



Taiwan



South Korea

② Right-turning cars must wait!

Drivers are asked to give way to oncoming vehicles in principle when the driver intends to turn right. Make right turns after oncoming cars have traveled past or turned left. Priority is given to left turns in Japan. There are no rules regarding giving way to right-turning cars

Pay attention to the differences from your own country.

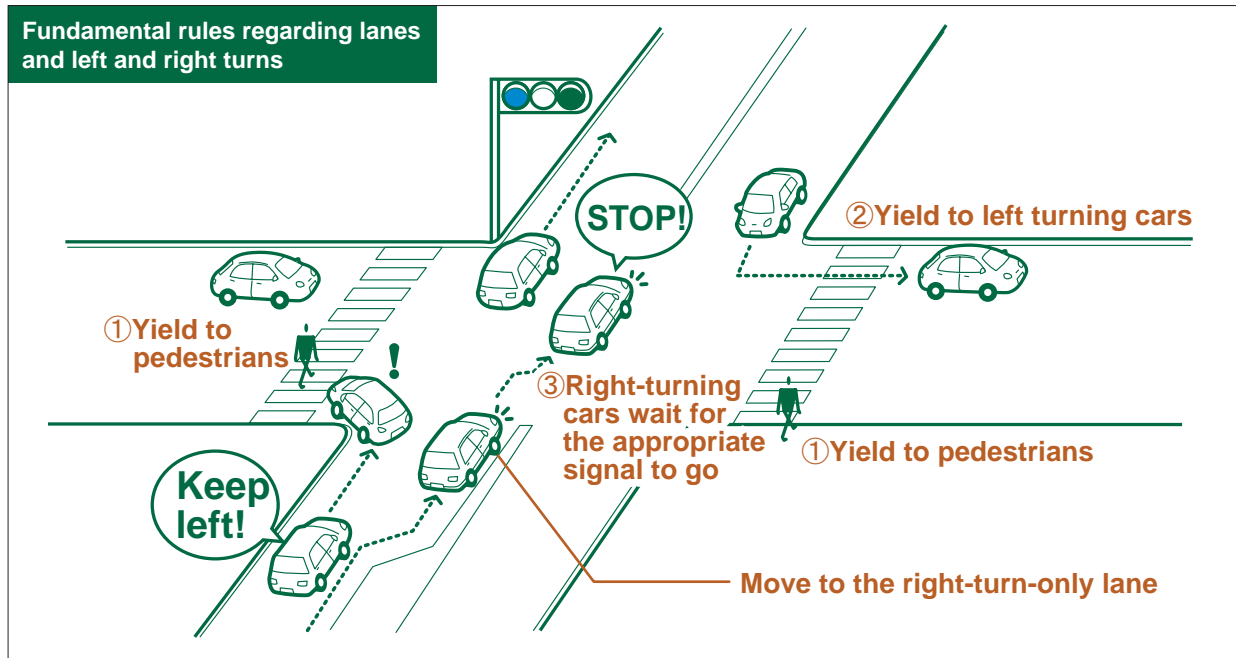


Singapore



Taiwan

Fundamental rules regarding lanes and left and right turns



③ Never fail to stop when a traffic light is red.

In Japan, there are hardly any roads or intersections that are "Turn left anytime" and that allow left-turning cars to turn left even if the traffic light is red. When the traffic light turns red, not only cars going straight but also left-turning cars have to stop. Wait until the traffic light becomes green.



Pay attention to the differences from your own country.



Hong Kong



South Korea

④ Obey arrow traffic lights.

When the traffic light is red, all cars must in principle stop. However, where there are arrow traffic lights provided below or at the side of the traffic lights, you may turn in the direction the arrow points when it is green. Right-turn arrow traffic lights are the most prevalent. When a right-turning arrow is shown, turn quickly while paying full attention to oncoming vehicles. Many intersections where this type of traffic light is provided have right-turn-only lanes.



Arrow traffic light

Pay attention to the differences from your own country.



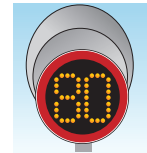
Taiwan

5 Always pay attention to speed limits! Legal speed limit is 60 km/h!

As there are many wide and long roads with few buildings lining them in Hokkaido, it is easy to lose a sense of your speed, and drivers may press down on the accelerator without thinking. Speed limits are set between 30 and 50 km/h in urban areas, and 60 km/h in the suburbs and on main roads. It is usually 100 km/h on expressways, but it may be limited to 50 km/h in case of strong winds and/or blizzards. Due to the large number of long roads, there are many public roads and expressways with long distances with no signs indicating speed limits or with electric signs that are showing no speed limits. On such roads, drivers are asked to obey the legal speed limits (60 km/h for public roads, 100km/h for expressways). Focus first on making a safe driving trip while paying attention to speed limits.



Basic speed sign



Electric speed limit sign

6 Pay attention to the no-overtaking zones!

Don't pass other cars in no-overtaking zones. It is because it is dangerous to do so that the zone was established. For example, the roads may have obstructed views or sharp curves ahead. Wait until the no-overtaking zones is finished and it is safe for a driver to pass others to pass other vehicles.



Unbroken yellow center lines indicate no passing zones.



Broken white center lines signify an ordinary zone.

7 Bring your car to a complete stop at stop signs and in front of train crossings!

Bring your car to a complete stop to safety check left and right

In Japan, it is a strictly enforced rule that you must bring your car to a stop at stop signs, and halfway stops are not permitted. A "stop" means that a car completely stops and the driver looks left and right. In addition, since V-shaped signs are peculiar to Japan, remember what they mean. Usually, no "Stop" signs are located on roads which cross other roads with V-shaped signs. In other words, cars are traveling at high speeds on the road you need to cross. In the event of an accident, full responsibility is apportioned to the driver who did not stop their car. Pay full attention and make sure you stop the car completely.

Pay attention to the differences from your own country.



Taiwan



South Korea

Each country's stop sign



Taiwan



South Korea



Singapore

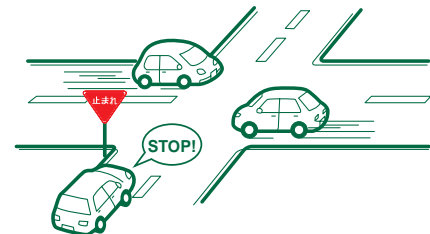


Hong Kong



Japan

Standard layout of intersections with a stop sign



Completely stop a car in front of train crossings!

Drivers must completely stop their car in front of train crossings to confirm that no trains are coming from left and right and the car can move forward safely. If the traffic over the train crossings is backed up, the car will not be able to move over the crossing for a long time.



Diagram of cars not able to move over a train crossing

Pay attention to the differences from your own country.



Hong Kong



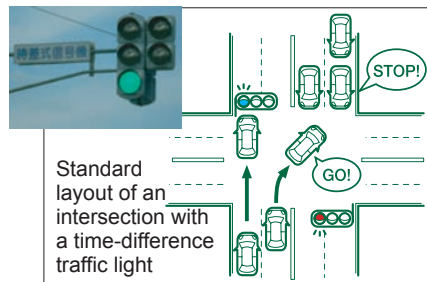
Singapore



Taiwan

8 Watch the traffic light in front carefully, and do not start to move before the traffic light turns green!

an intersection with a time-difference traffic light →

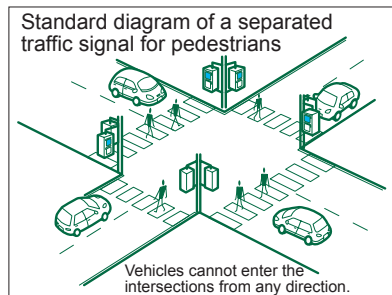


What is a time-difference traffic light?

When the traffic light for the lanes in your direction is red, the signal for the oncoming lanes is usually red, too. Time-difference traffic lights, however, are set to be green for busy lanes longer than for the other lanes.

What are separate traffic signals for pedestrians?

There are separate traffic signals for pedestrians in areas where there are many pedestrians in order to be able to keep pedestrians and vehicles separate. When traffic lights for vehicles are green, all the traffic signals for pedestrians are red. Then, when all the traffic lights for vehicles turn red, the intersections are open for pedestrians to walk.



9 Never drink and drive!

All over the world it is now considered common sense not to drive a car under the influence of alcohol. It is the same in Japan, however enforcement of the law and penalties for breaking it are stricter here. If alcohol is detected by a breath test, you will be penalized with imprisonment of up to three years or a fine of up to a 500,000 yen. Even more severe penalties are imposed for driving while intoxicated. In Japan, drivers who refuse to take a breath test are also punished. Sober passengers who ride together with a drunken driver as well as those who encouraged a driver to drink will also be punished. Never drink and drive.



Column

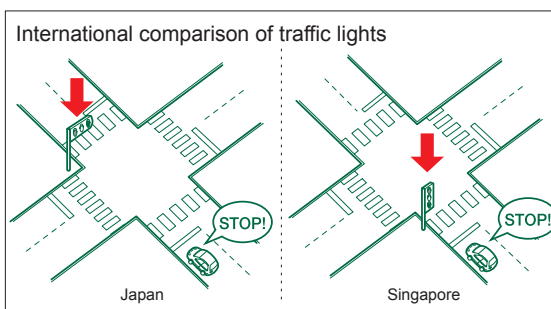
Position of traffic signals

International drivers should initially pay attention to the position where they should stop their car. Please note that traffic lights in Japan are located on the front side of intersections and you must stop your car rather far from

Pay attention to the differences from your own country.



Bite-sized information for your benefit

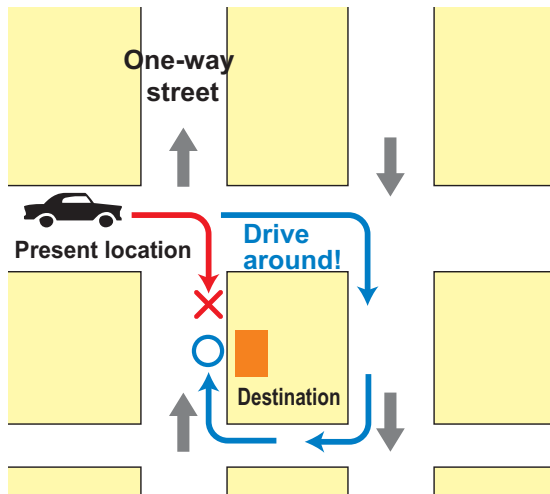


● Bureau of Lifestyle Improvement, Department of Environment and Lifestyle, Hokkaido Government "Basic knowledge of traffic safety" (Japanese, English, traditional Chinese, Korean)
<http://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/ks/ska/saftydrive/eng/>

● Toyota Rent a Car (English)
<http://rent.toyota.co.jp/en/index.html>

What do you do if you cannot make a turn because the road you want to turn into is a one-way street?

One-way streets can be frequently found in downtown areas and on busy streets. To reach your destination, you will have to pass the one-way street and drive in a round-about way to your destination. In the central part of Sapporo, one-way streets run from south to north alternating. Drivers should learn the layout of roads at least in the central part of the city.



Central part of Sapporo One-way street Review Map



Column

Buckle up to save your life! Never forget.

It is the responsibility of not only the driver but also passengers to fasten their seatbelts. In 2008, passengers became legally required to fasten their seatbelts, even in the back seat. All children under 6 must be seated in child seats. Since rental car companies rent child seats at relatively low prices, make sure to reserve them in advance.



Bite-sized information for your benefit



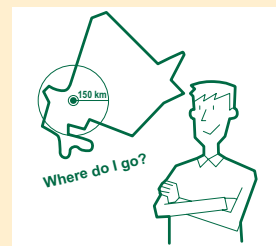
Quick Tip

For comfortable driving in Hokkaido



The total distance you cover in a driving trip should not exceed 150 kilometers per day.

That is, if a driver plans their driving routes by themselves, the total distance of the trip should not exceed 150 kilometers per day. The total number of hours spent driving should also be less than three to four hours on public roads. Even if you include time for meals and sightseeing, the total driving time should not exceed the figure above. Design the trip with spare time built in to take side trips. In addition, it is recommended to calculate the distance between the places where you intend to stay and plan with that information in mind. Careful selection of places to stay will have an important effect on your driving trips.



Avoid driving at night!

It is hard to find destinations in places you do not know at the best of times but as drivers face increased difficulties in finding landmarks in darkness after sunset, the chances of getting lost increase. Hokkaido roads in the suburbs usually have no or few street lights, and they may be darker than you imagine. Be careful especially about driving in autumn and winter when the hours of daylight get shorter.



When a penalty sticker is affixed to your car

As parking violations are stringently policed in Japan, be sure to park your car in appropriate parking areas or assigned lots when leaving your car, even for a short time. When a penalty sticker is affixed to your car, payment of a fine between 10,000 yen and 18,000 yen will have to be made (in the case of passenger cars).

When a parking fine sticker is attached to a rented car

1. Reporting to a police station

Report to **the police station** indicated on the parking sticker immediately.

2. Pay the fine

When you go to the police station, complete the necessary documents and you will receive a payment notice. Pay the illegal parking fine at the nearest financial institution (bank etc) and get a receipt.

3. Report to the rental car company

Present the completed forms for the penalty and your receipt



Make a phone call to the number shown here.



You must inform the rental car company of any parking fines!

When a parking fine sticker is affixed to a car, the owner is contacted and informed of the violation through the license plate (in this case, the rental car company). Go through the formalities by following the instructions of the police before returning your rented car.



Make sure you know the areas in which parking is banned

There are many people from other countries who violate the parking regulations in Japan. According to a survey by rental car companies, the arrest rate for illegal parking by people from abroad is eight times the rate of Japanese. Check the areas where parking is banned by checking traffic signs and lane markings.

The policing of on-street parking is very stringent. Where, then, should a driver park their car?

The policing of parking and penalties for violation became very stringent after revision of the law in June 2006. A driver cannot park their car just anywhere, so please park your car after checking the parking signs. When a parking fine sticker is affixed to your car, payment of a fine between 10,000 and 18,000 yen is required (in the case of passenger cars). From the start, park your car in parking lots.

Column

Bite-sized information for your benefit

Small soba noodle shops or curry-and-rice restaurants in regional towns may provide no or few parking lots. Even in these cases, never park your car on the road. As the shop may provide parking lots a little further from the shop, ask the shop staff for information.



No Parking signs

No Parking and No Stopping



This sign indicates an area where parking and stopping is prohibited. Drivers cannot park or even stop their car on roads with this sign. The "8-20" in the upper part of the sign indicates the time of day for which this sign is applicable, i.e. between 8:00 – 20:00.

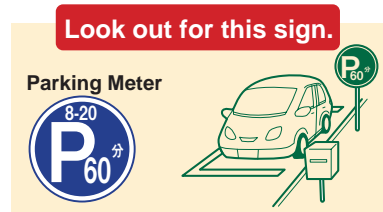
No parking zone





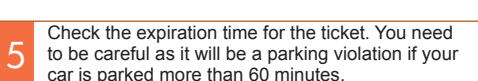


This sign indicates a no parking zone. On roads with this sign, a driver cannot park the car except to let off passengers or take on or drop off things. The "8-20" in the upper part of the sign indicates the time of day for which this sign is applicable, i.e. between 8:00 – 20:00.

Use pay parking meters!

If you wish to park your car temporarily, use pay parking meters. It is relatively easy to find and use pay parking meters. Parking spaces are marked with white enclosing lines drawn on the streets in the area where the sign at right is posted. A fee must be paid in advance and you can only pay for a fixed amount of time.



- 1 Park your car in a designated space. 
- 2 Insert coins in the parking ticket vending machine. 
- 3 A parking ticket will be dispensed. 
- 4 Affix the parking ticket inside the windshield so that it is visible from outside. 
- 5 Check the expiration time for the ticket. You need to be careful as it will be a parking violation if your car is parked more than 60 minutes. 

Use both private and public parking facilities!

Parking fees vary among locations. In this handbook you will be given information on parking fees in Sapporo's city center, the hardest place to find parking in Hokkaido. The department stores and shopping malls you may visit will have contract parking lots. Be sure to check in advance if they offer free parking if you spend a certain amount of money in their shop. Fee structures vary from one parking lot to the next. Some parking lots charge a flat all-day rate (about 1,000 – 2,000 yen) whether you park for a short period (around 20 minutes) or hours.

Regarding the current going rates (as of January 2009), fees around Sapporo Station are roughly 100 yen for 20 minutes and 300 to 340 yen an hour, whereas in the Odori area, fees range from 100 yen for 15 minutes and 400 to 500 yen an hour. Needless to say, there are cheaper places to park outside the center city area.

Public Underground Parking Lots

There are three large underground parking lots in central Sapporo. They are so large and spacious that you can easily find a parking space but if you do not remember to note where you parked (such as noticing the number on the column nearest your car) you may be unable to find your car, so be careful.

Sapporo Station North Exit Underground Parking Lot
¥170 per 1/2 hr.
Mon – Sat
8:00 – 22:00



Kita Ichijo Underground Parking Lot
¥190 per 1/2 hr.
7:30 – 22:00



Sapporo Odori Underground Parking Lot
¥380 per hr.
08:00 ~ 22:00



Multilevel/Tower Parking Garages

There are no large parking lots in the city center where there is a lack of space. Most parking lots are either multilevel or tower parking lots.

Multilevel Parking

Get a ticket at the entrance gate. Drive into the lot, ascend the spiral ramp and park in an available space. To exit, drive your car down the spiral ramp, insert your ticket and money in the machine.



Tower Parking

Following the attendant's instructions, cars need to be driven onto a platform that will be lifted like an elevator. To retrieve your car, give the ticket you received from the attendant when parking back to him/her and your car will be brought back down to the main level.



Self-Service Coin Parking

There are inexpensive self-service coin parking lots that allow you to park near the street. After you park your car, wheel-clamps will automatically rise into place to keep your wheels from moving. To remove your car, go to the car park pay meter, enter the stall number where you parked using the numeric keys and pay the parking fee. This will automatically release the wheel-clamps.



Other

There are, of course, the good old conventional parking lots with a pay booth at the entrance with an attendant sitting inside and you leave your car key with him/her. If you wish to obtain information on the area, it may be a good idea to use this type of parking lot so you can ask the attendant questions.



Totally lost?
Help is here!

Japanese only

Handy
Website

Sapporo Parking Information System

<http://parking-info.jp/sapporo/pc/index.php>

It is a Japanese only website, but the maps and photos are helpful





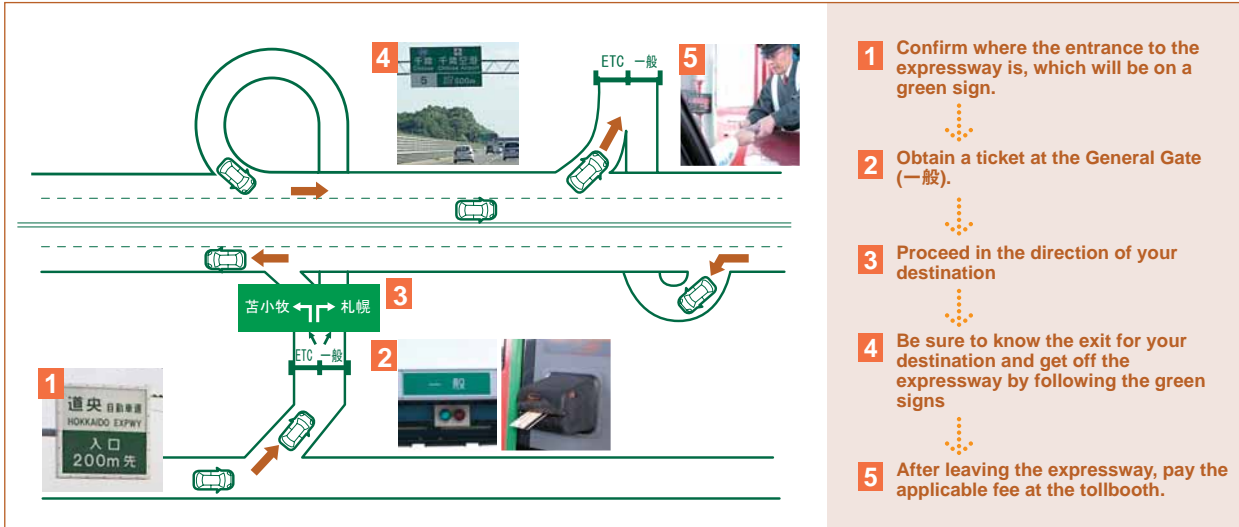
COMFORTABLE DRIVING
IN HOKKAIDO



3-3. Use expressways!

Since Hokkaido is big, it is often necessary to travel large distances to move from one place to the next. In particular, if your plans include driving across some large cities with many traffic lights and heavy traffic, using expressways will lead to substantial time savings. Use them wisely.

If you make sure in advance that you know: 1. Your present location, 2. The location of the entrance, and 3. The name of the exit you need to take, you will be alright.



Where is the entrance?

Enter the expressway at the entrance referred to as IC (interchanges) such as "Chitose IC." All the road signs for local streets are blue in color, however, since all the locations for interchanges are marked in green, look out for green signs while driving.



Which gate should I use?

There are general lanes, ETC lanes and dual use lanes at the entrance. The ETC lanes require an ETC card which foreign visitors cannot obtain so use the green "general lane."



Which way should I go?

After passing the gate, the road will split in 2 directions. You must choose the lane that will take you in the direction of where you wish to go. As the signs show the names of cities, it is a good idea to check the geographical location of the major city and IC (interchange) in advance. If, by any chance, you find yourself heading in the opposite direction from where you intended to go, stay calm, get off the expressway at the next IC and start over again.



The reason why you cannot use the ETC only lanes

An ETC Card is used exclusively to pay expressway tolls and other related fees. It identifies the payer and the payment is automatically charged to the user's credit card or bank account that has been registered with the ETC system. However, since the ETC Card requires the user to have a bank account in Japan or be authenticated by a Japanese credit card company, it will take time to have one issued. Hence, unfortunately it is difficult for a visitor to obtain an ETC Card as things currently stand. Be careful of the ETC lanes as only cars that are set up to use the ETC Card system can use these lanes.



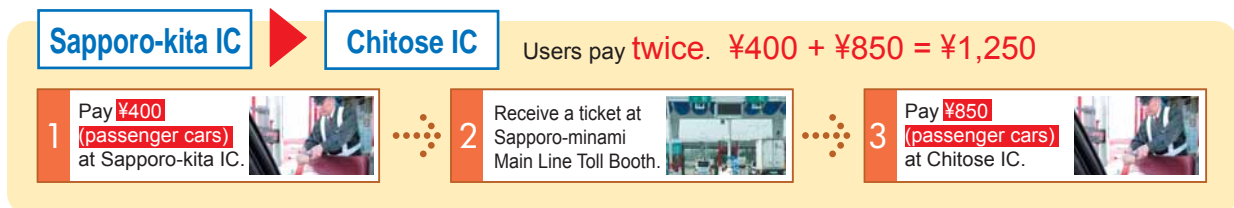
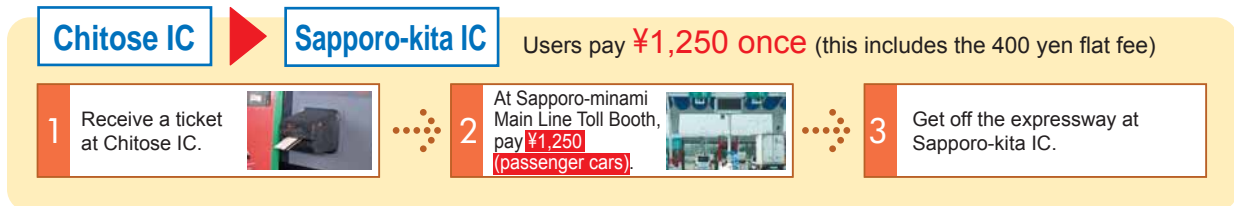
An example of an ETC Card
高速入CARD
"E-NEXCO pass"

The flat rate toll used in Sapporo must be pre-paid!

At the IC entrances in Sapporo, a toll booth and not a ticket dispenser will greet you immediately. The system here calls for a prepayment of the flat fee (¥400 for passenger cars).

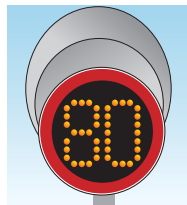


This is how the tolls in Sapporo work!



Speed Limit

Speed limits are variable and will change depending on the weather and/or road conditions. If there are no signs, the speed limit is 100 km/hr. Always check the speed limit signs while driving.



Toll Booths

To use expressways, users obtain a ticket from a dispenser at the entrance gate and pay the applicable toll, which varies by the distance traveled, to an attendant at the exit. To pay, cash or the following credit cards are accepted (no need to sign the transaction slip):

JCB Card, NICOS Card, American Express Card, Diners Club Card, VISA Card and MasterCard.

Drive in the Cruising Lane (Keep Left)!

A 2-lane expressway is divided into the "cruising lane" and "passing lane." Under normal conditions, stay in the cruising lane on the left hand side (keep left). Only pass in the right-hand lane. As this road traffic (expressway) regulation is strictly enforced, it is advisable to return to the cruising lane after having passed another vehicle.



Totally lost?
Help is here!



The expressway toll schedule (passenger cars) can be downloaded from the Internet.



Handy
Website

Dora-Pla E-NEXCO Drive Plaza Japanese only
<http://www.driveplaza.com/route/pdf/hokkaido/pdfs/price01.pdf>

3-4. How to use gas stations

gas stations are called “GA-SO-RI-N SU-TA-N-DO” in Japan. There have been problems due to confusion over the names of the various types of fuels, so learn what they are beforehand.

*The abbreviations GS for gas stations or SS for service stations will be used below.

Where are gas stations?

Gas stations can be commonly seen in urban areas or along the busy main roads, but they are rarely found once you are away from a city or along a road with very little traffic. There are more GS along highways with 2 or more lanes and other roads which large-sized vehicles such as trucks utilize. Regarding operating hours, you should be aware that while some GS are open 24 hours a day in urban areas, some gas stations in the countryside where there is little traffic may close after 18:00 during the week and may not be open at all on weekends. Rather than waiting until you are running very low on gas to fill up, it is advisable to fuel up often.

These signs are the ones to look out for.

Signs of the major gasoline stand chains



There are two types of gas stations.

There are two types of gas stations: a. “Full Service” where sales staff are always present and refuel for you and b. “Self Service” where you refuel your own car. Prices are slightly cheaper at self-service stands. At full service stands, all you have to do is to tell the staff what kind of gas you want and how much, either in liters or yen. If you want a full tank, just say “MA-N-TA-N” (full tank). The staff will refuel your car and offer services such as wiping your car’s windows. Every once in a while, you will be offered a free map or pack of tissues.

There are three types of fuel with two types of gasoline.

Fuel comes in three types including “HI OKU” (high octane), “regular” and “diesel.” Rental cars in Japan, for the most part, have gasoline engines and require “regular” gasoline. There are virtually no rental cars with diesel engines so under no circumstances should you use diesel fuel in a rental car. The car will not run if it has been filled up with diesel fuel. Additionally, gasoline sold in Japan is virtually all lead-free.

●Types of fuel (gasoline)

[Be careful not to confuse the gasoline types when refueling at a self-service stand!]

Generally speaking, “regular” means gasoline with an octane value of approximately 90, whereas, “Hi-Oku” (high octane) means gasoline with an octane value ranging between 98 and 100. Depending on the gas stations, “Hi-Oku” will have a unique product name such as “Premium,” “Super,” “F1,” “Vigo,” “Super Magnum” or “Shell Pura” that identifies the high octane gasoline as a product that improves fuel efficiency, ensures optimum engine performance and has energy and environmental qualities.



Quick Tip Identify the gasoline type by the color of the nozzle! The nozzle of regular gasoline is RED.

The colors of gasoline stand nozzles are standardized across the country with red being “regular”, yellow being “high octane” and green being “diesel”.



English Signage	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Japan
Ultimate unleaded*	98無鉛汽油	高級汽油	ハイオク (HA-I-O-KU)
Unleaded	92無鉛汽油	普通汽油	レギュラー (RE-GYU-RA-A)
Diesel	柴油	柴油	軽油 (KE-I-YU)

*Depending on the stand, “Ultimate unleaded” may be called “Plus unleaded,” “Super unleaded,” or “Premium unleaded.”



Oil type & price



Refuel at a self-service gas station!

Here is an introduction about how to use self-service gas stations.

*Since the system may be different depending on the gas stations, we are giving you just one example here. At some gas stations, drivers pay the amount they owe for the gasoline to the staff at the register after refueling.



1

Stop your car alongside the petrol pump

Stop your car alongside the petrol pump keeping in mind which side your petrol tank is on. Make sure you know in advance which side your petrol tank is on. Park the car and turn off the engine.



2

Pay first

The fee should be paid beforehand, and cash and credit cards may be used.

(1) Cash: Insert the amount of money in the loading slot.

If a driver intends to refuel by 30 l, insert approximately 5,000 to 6,000 yen in bills. The cost is calculated by multiplying the unit costs (per liter) by the amount of gasoline (l) you used, and any change owed will be repaid into the coin return slot.

(2) Credit card: Activate the card by inserting it.

Insert your credit card into the appropriate slit and swipe it through the reader to load the data.



3

Select the gasoline type and the volume (number of liters)

Select the gasoline you wish to use by pushing the button for either premier, regular or light gasoline. Rental car users usually choose regular. The amount of petrol can be selected in two ways: choose one of 10 l, 20 l, 30 l ... 50 l options or select 1,000 yen, 2,000 yen, 3,000 yen ... 5,000 yen. If a driver wants to fill their car up, *MA-N-TA-N* should be selected.



4

Refueling

Open your petrol tank, pick up the nozzle for the gasoline you have selected, insert the nozzle into your tank firmly. There are usually three types of nozzles, so make sure you select the right type of petrol. Petrol types are always indicated by the same colors. Pull the lever to start refueling. When you have finished refueling, the petrol will stop automatically (The driver cannot pull the lever anymore).



5

Refueling completed.

Return the nozzle to the pump, and close the cap of your petrol tank firmly. Confirm the amount of gasoline and the charge shown on the display. Don't forget to pick up your change when you pay by cash. A receipt is printed out automatically for use of both cash and credit cards.



Quick
Tip

**Gasoline is
dangerous!**

Needless to say, fire, such as cigarettes, must be put out while you are filling your car. If gasoline catches fire, it will be very dangerous. As static electricity is also dangerous, do not forget to touch a static electricity removal sheet before starting to refuel. Use of mobile phones is also prohibited.



3-5. Be careful on snowy roads!

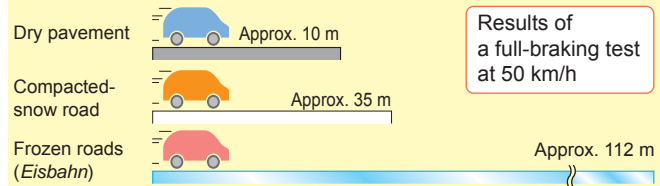
In Hokkaido, there are many winter activities, such as skiing, snowboarding and enjoying hot springs. Since the baggage required for these activities tends to be big, this is when rental cars can be very convenient. Winter roads, however, require advanced driving skills. Remember this basic knowledge to avoid serious trouble.



During the winter season, rental cars are always equipped with snow tires (for use on winter roads).

Slippery!

Compacted-snow roads are roads on which snow has fallen and then been pressed down and compacted by the movement of vehicles. Icy roads (*Eisbahn*) are those that are covered with thin ice formed by the refreezing of snow that fell and then melted on the roads, and these are especially slippery. Winter roads are very dangerous, because once a car skids, it is hard to control it.



(Extracted from the Web site by the Hokkaido Government's Department of Environment and Lifestyle, Safe Living Environment Promotion Division)



Don't be tricked by black icy roads (*Eisbahn*)!

Black *Eisbahn* is the worst type of icy roads. The road is covered with refrozen melted snow after rain. They look a little like wet roads, however, they are the slipperiest roads. Be very careful on black shiny roads in winter!

It's impossible to see!

Strong snowstorms can obstruct your view forward and snow being blown up from the road may also lead to low visibility. In addition, your range of vision may be reduced suddenly due to powdery snow blown up by oncoming trucks. Drivers just have to slow down in such situations.



Getting stuck!

If you drive into deep snow, you may not be able to get your car out. As far as is possible, find cleared roads or drive along wheel tracks left by other cars.



Things you must not do!

“Sudden braking,” “Sudden acceleration,” “Abrupt steering” Your wheels will lock up (continue to slide without your tires moving) if you brake suddenly and your car get out of control so avoid this.



Quick Tip

Rental car users who intend to drive on winter roads for the first time should ask for a car equipped with ABS* when they make their reservation.

*ABS : This Anti-lock Brake System allows drivers to maintain steering control and avoid an accident even under heavy braking. However, it can also present disadvantages including increased braking distance on slippery surfaces, such as on ice, or smooth roads. ABS should not be solely relied upon .



Quick Tip

Are brakes broken?

Drivers, who use ABS (Anti-lock Brake System) for the first time, may be surprised with how they function. When wheels lock (continue to slide without your tires moving) on frozen roads, a loud sound can be heard at the moment of braking. This is the noise caused by the actuation of the device to control the brakes automatically. Drivers need not ease up on the brakes in a hurry.



Three key points to driving in winter

Drive slowly

The basic point is not to increase your speed. Driving slowly will give you time to avoid danger should the need arise.



Keep a safe distance between cars.

Keeping a safe distance between you and the car ahead gives you enough time to react and cope with emergency situations.



Understand the traffic conditions ahead

Many winter traffic accidents are caused by a delay in drivers understanding traffic conditions ahead. Pay attention to the brake lamps of the front two cars as well as traffic conditions ahead.



Learn how to use the engine to brake!

Cars accelerate automatically on down grades. In such cases, drivers should use not brakes but the engine to brake to control the speed. Using the engine to control speed is achieved by utilizing the power of the gears and changing the mode of the automatic transmission from D (drive) to S (or 3 or 2 according to models). Be sure to change the gear slowly while slowing the car down.



Tips about winter driving



1 Windshield wipers are frozen and they don't work

Wet wipers will get stuck to the windshield when frozen. You can avoid this by lifting the wiper arms off the windshield and leaving them like that overnight.



2 It is bright on sunny days

It is very dazzling when the sun reflects off the snow in winter. It is a good idea to carry sunglasses to combat the glare.



3 Clumps of snow come crashing down onto the car roof

Before driving be sure to remove any snow that has accumulated on the car roof. Otherwise clumps of snow may slide down the windshield without warning while driving and may block your view.



4 How slippery is it?

If you test your brakes while driving at a low speed and where you know it is safe to do so, you will learn how slippery the road is that day. Don't ever do this when there are cars in front of or behind you.



5 Melted snow from the car in front is showering your car

There are times when melted snow off the car in front or splashed up by oncoming vehicles covers your windshield and reduces visibility. Be sure to maintain a sufficient amount of windshield washer fluid in your car at all times. A winter formula that provides anti-freeze protection can be purchased at auto supply shops and home centers.



6 Everywhere is white and I cannot tell where the road is

In blizzard conditions, you cannot see what is ahead. Blowing snow caused by strong winds may reduce visibility. Drifting snow blown up by oncoming trucks will also obstruct your view for a moment. In these situations, remember to reduce your speed and drive slowly.



Stay home when the weather is bad!

In winter, weather conditions can change suddenly in some areas. Also, some areas do not have reception for cell phones. If you are stranded in one of these places you will be unable to call for help and will freeze in the extreme cold. It could take hours before the rescue party arrives and your life will be at risk. If bad weather is forecast therefore, do not go out even if this means you have to change your plans.



For more information on things to keep in mind about winter driving

- "Basic Knowledge of Road Safety," (Available in: Japanese, English, Traditional Chinese and Korean) issued by Department of Environment and Lifestyle, Hokkaido Government

<http://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/ks/ska/safydrive/eng/>





Chapter 4 What should you do in a situation like this?

4-1. If you are in a car accident or have committed a traffic violation · ·	40
4-2. If you have an injury or illness · · · · ·	41
4-3. If you have weather-related trouble · · · · ·	42
4-4. If your car breaks down · · · · ·	43
4-5. If your car is hit by a wild animal · · · · ·	44

You never think that you will run into trouble during your vacation but that is actually what you should be concerned about most. If you know how to handle emergencies, you will be anxiety-free and able to act without panicking in extreme situations.

I don't understand Japanese. What should I do? ⇒ See Page 46

First, ask a Japanese person who is on the scene for help. He/she should be able to explain the situation at the scene to the police and fire department personnel. If there is no one nearby, call the police and tell them the "situation" and "location." Stay calm and check the car navigation system for the location.

What if I had an accident?

If you had a major accident in which you are seriously injured, you will have no choice but to wait for someone to help. The question is what you should do when you hit another car or hurt someone. It is important to deal with the situation calmly. First of all, it is essential to ensure that a second accident will not occur. You should learn the following procedure:

What to do when an accident happens

① Make the area as safe as possible

Look around you and make an assessment as to what actions are necessary to make the area safe, such as moving your car so that it is not blocking traffic, moving any injured person(s) to a safe location, and so on.

② Dial 119 to call an ambulance

Call an ambulance if someone is injured. It may be necessary to give the injured person first aid in order to stop bleeding while waiting for an ambulance.

③ Dial 110 to call the police and follow their instructions

Call the police and give a detailed description of the accident. Be sure to contact the police as you will need an accident report for compensation at a later date.

④ Contact your car rental company

Finally, call your car rental company and follow their instructions. The car rental company will make all arrangements including contacting the insurance company, moving your car, and other related matters.

Be sure to report it no matter how small the accident is

Even if you had a single car accident and your car is still road-worthy, be sure to report it to the car rental company. It may be necessary to report to the police as well in some cases.

Information you should give when calling 110 and 119

See Page 46 for "Phrases to use (by pointing) in Emergency Situations". "There was an accident and 'x' number of people were injured. The location is (give location) my name is My phone number is, and cell phone number is"

Do not negotiate a settlement on the scene.

In the case of a minor accident, the other party may offer to settle the matter with cash on the spot. However, you will be at a disadvantage if you are unfamiliar with the rules and regulations involved. It is safer to decline his/her offer and follow the instructions of the car rental company.

Be sure to identify the other party

Give the other party your information and obtain the other party's information. Additionally, if you have a camera, it would be a good idea to take photos of the scene.

- Your name, address and phone numbers and those of the other party
- Your driver's license number and that of the other party



Quick Tip

On expressways, use the "Emergency Telephone!"

If you have an accident or if your car breaks down on an expressway, make the area safe by parking your car on the shoulder and turning on your emergency blinkers or use a triangle reflector to alert other vehicles of the emergency situation, then contact the road authorities. If you use the "Emergency Telephone" instead of your cell phone, your present location will automatically be notified to the rescue crew. "Emergency Telephones" are installed every 1 km so you will be able to find one within 500 m, either ahead of you or behind.



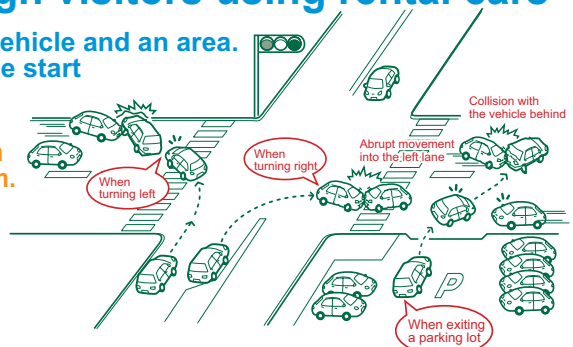
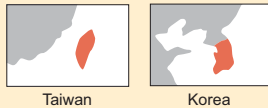
Status of accidents involving foreign visitors using rental cars

Watch out when you have become familiar with your vehicle and an area. Be more careful in the latter part of your trip than at the start

- Accidents happen when foreign visitors move into the opposite lane after making a right/left turn (due to being used to right-hand lane traffic.)

Having entered the wrong traffic lane, foreign visitors can panic and collide with oncoming cars or cars behind them.

Pay attention to the differences from your own country.



The accident that happens most frequently in parking lots is caused by drivers not checking to see what is behind their cars.

Cars are parked very close to each other and visibility is often poor in parking lots due to dim lighting. Additionally, being in an "unfamiliar car" may contribute to errors in perception regarding the width of the vehicle. The most frequent cause of accidents is a lack of sufficient attention to things behind the car. If you park forwards, you will need to back out when you leave. This means that you will have many blind spots and it is highly possible that you will end up in an accident. If possible, park by slowly backing into a space so you can leave the parking space in a forwards direction and be able to see clearly.



Report it to the police even if it is a small accident!

Although you have insurance, it will not apply if you do not report an accident. You will become responsible for the full cost of the accident. Therefore, be sure to report any accident to the police however minor it may seem.

What should you do if you are injured or suddenly become ill while driving?

How you handle a situation where you are injured or become ill during the trip will vary depending on time, place and your symptoms.

Check your symptoms

Check your symptoms calmly and work out how to handle the situation. *If you have a pre-existing medical condition, be sure to consult with your family physician prior to the trip.

Go to the hospital

Don't continue on regardless but instead put the trip on hold and go to the nearest hospital. Generally Japanese hospitals are open to outpatients during the week.



If you are injured or ill during non-business days or after hours

Go to an emergency center or to a doctor on call

For people seeking medical care outside business hours, emergency medical facilities (emergency centers and other related facilities) or doctors on call are available in Japan. Ask the Japanese people around you and they should be able to suggest an appropriate hospital. It is also safe to ask people at a tourist bureau or stores.



Dial 119

If a serious injury or sudden illness develops, call 119 and you can get an ambulance.

You will be asked where you are and what your symptoms are, so ask a Japanese person near you for help.



Quick Tip Local residents are the best source of medical service information!

Information about medical services is an important part of local residents' lives. If you are unwell, do not hesitate to ask them for help. You should be able to communicate that you "want to go to the hospital" using signs and gestures.

To explain your symptoms, see Page 46 for "Phrase to use (by pointing) in Emergency Situations."

What about paying the doctor's fee?

Since the Japanese health insurance system applies only to Japanese people, you will be charged the full amount for any medical treatment received. The amount will vary depending on the symptoms, treatment and any medication that is issued. You may have to be prepared to pay in the range of tens of thousands of yen. Since virtually no hospitals yet accept credit cards, you will have no choice but to pay by cash. If you have overseas travel insurance, you should be able to claim a refund from the insurance company later. Ask the hospital to fill out the insurance claim form or to issue a medical certificate. Keep your receipt for the medical costs in a safe place.

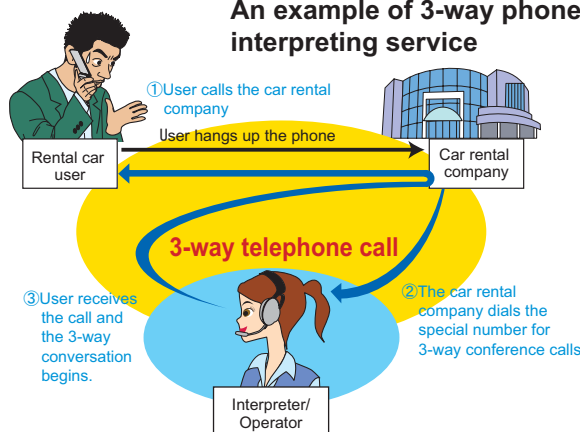


There is 3-Way Phone Interpreting Service!

Some of the major car rental companies offer a 3-way phone interpreting service! This is a 3-way simultaneous conference call system which uses an operator who can translate your conversation.

- ① User calls the car rental company. User hangs up the phone.
- ② The car rental company dials the special number for the 3-way conference call.
- ③ User receives the call and the 3-way conversation begins.

An example of 3-way phone interpreting service



Quick Tip

Get a cell phone before coming to Japan!

The number of pay phones has steadily decreased as cell phones became more popular in Japan. Be sure to carry a "cell phone" as a means of communication in case of emergencies.

If your cell phone supports "GSM 3G," you can use it as it is in Japan. Before you leave your country, check with your cell phone service provider as to whether your cell phone is set up for international roaming. If your cell phone cannot be used, you can rent one that supports 3G at the airport or other places.



Using a cell phone while driving is strictly prohibited!

What should you do if the road is closed due to heavy rainfall or a blizzard?

If by any chance the road is closed, it is important to gather as much information as you can. Since weather information may be available only in Japanese, ask the Japanese people around you for help.

1

Gather information

First of all, gather: 1. weather information, 2. road information and 3. information on the public transportation system. Be especially careful to do this if it is the last day of your trip and you have your flight home to catch. Check to see if there is any other means of transportation to make your return flight.

2

Travel by an alternative method of transportation

Consider alternative means of travel if there is no hope of a road closure being lifted or weather conditions improving. If public transport is available, return the rental car to the nearest office and switch to public transport such as trains or airplanes. The first thing you will need to do will be to secure some reservations/tickets.

3

Make all the necessary phone calls

Contact the car rental company if you are returning your vehicle to the nearest office. Contact the airlines that are operating your return flight and let them know beforehand your present situation, what time you expect to arrive at the airport, and that you will be delayed. Additionally, if it doesn't seem like you will make the return flight, discuss a reservation change with the airlines. If you are in transit, don't forget to contact the hotel that you have booked for that night and report your situation to them.

There are two major poor weather conditions that have a major impact on transportation systems in Hokkaido

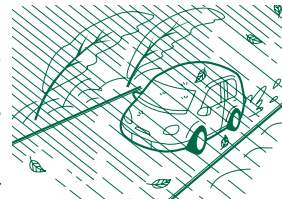
Blizzards

During the winter between December and March, the winter pressure pattern sets in and creates an atmospheric pattern of "western highs and eastern lows." When this happens, the wind will pick up and will often bring blizzard conditions. Caution is needed when this happens.



Typhoons

Typhoons are not very common in Hokkaido but there have been more incidents of them in recent years. There may be some major rainstorms and windstorms in August and September. Caution is needed and you should check traffic information for landslides during heavy rainstorms.



*Other: Although they are not common, localized snowstorms and rainstorms can occur throughout Hokkaido. Be careful since the transportation system may be paralyzed in such circumstances.

If a blizzard or typhoon is forecast, it will influence traffic conditions significantly, so be sure to check road information right away.



Take advantage of Michi-no-Eki (Road Stations)

Information terminals offering road information are available in Michi-no-Eki (Road Stations). If you have no other access to the internet, you can check road information there.



**Totally lost?
Help is here!**

How do I find road information or details of weather/road conditions in the mountains?

In Hokkaido, there are many summits when traveling over a big mountain range and, due to the high elevation, weather conditions around the summit areas can be completely different from that on the plains. As weather conditions can change suddenly, be sure to have sufficient information at all times and be sure also to learn the names of the major summits that are included in your planned route. Information on snowfalls and gale winds are essential for winter driving and must be checked before you start a trip. Consider changing the route or plan, if necessary.

1. Weather information is available in English on the websites at right.

Japan Meteorological Agency
<http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/indexe.html> (English only)



Japan Weather Association
<http://www.njwa.jp/eweather/> (English only)



2. Road information and summit information are available on the websites at right.

Weather information for the summit areas and road information are available in foreign languages on the website given below:
Northern Road Navi
<http://northern-road.jp/navi/eng/> (English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese and Korean)



Although it is available only in Japanese, the following website is the most useful to get the latest information on road closures and other related matters.
Hokkaido Development Bureau Hokkaido Regional Road Information
<http://info-road.hdb.go.jp/index.htm> (Japanese only)



3. Information on the operating conditions for public transport is available on the website at right.

Flight information for arrivals/departures is also available.
New Chitose Airport Terminal Building (English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese and Korean)
<http://new-chitose-airport.jp/en/>

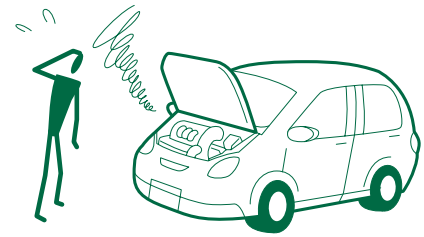


Operating conditions for the railways are available only in Japanese but it can be useful to check the headings.
JR Hokkaido (English, Traditional Chinese and Korean)
<http://www2.jrhokkaido.co.jp/global/>



Car problems and what to do

You may run into various car troubles including a dead battery, keys locked inside the car, driving into ditches, etc. First of all, the top priority is to contact your car rental company but please note that services to help fix these problems are not free and you will be charged.



Are there stress-free service offerings that help you deal with emergency situations?

Service plans offered by major car rental companies

Companies offer various service plans called "Stress-Free Plan" and other product names that offer roadside services, road information service, etc., so make sure you take advantage of them.

Examples of a plan offered by one of the car rental companies

1. Roadside Service

(4 free roadside services included)

- Changing your tire when you get a flat tire
- Supplying gasoline when you run out of fuel
- Jump-starting a dead battery
- Unlocking your car if you lock your keys inside

+

2. Telephone assistance service available for when you are in trouble

- Alternative means of transportation
- Lodging
- Transferring your phone call to JAF (Japan Automobile Federation)
- Finding a gasoline stand
- Highway information

+

3. Hassle-free late returns

+

4. Hassle-free early cancellations

+

5. Additional insurance coverage

Consult with the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF)

Japan Automobile Federation (JAF) is open 24 hours a day/7 days a week and offers nationwide roadside services. They will come to your location to assist with a dead battery or keys locked in free of charge if you are a JAF member. JAF also offers various services to non-members for fees.



JAF

Calling the JAF Roadside Service

There is a charge for calling 0570-00-8139 (Navi Dial)
(¥10/minute for home phones and ¥10/20 seconds for cell phones)
Alternatively, dial a speed number #8139 (There is a charge)

If you cannot use the phone number at left,
call Hokkaido Call Center at
011-857-8139



Be sure to carry proof of your membership in the Automobile Association!

Members of automobile clubs participating in reciprocity agreements with the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) can receive the JAF roadside service under the same conditions as JAF members. If you are a member of the Hong Kong Automobile Association (HKAA) or Automobile Association of Singapore (AAS), be sure to bring proof of your membership.

Reciprocal services of Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)

Automobile clubs affiliated with FIA in each country/region offer services to their mutual members under the FIA reciprocal agreement. Automobile clubs in over 60 countries worldwide are now offering various services to their members under the umbrella of FIA following the terms of the membership agreement.

*With respect to Taiwan and Korea, while they are affiliated with FIA, they are not participating in the reciprocal agreement. Hence, as a general rule, members in those countries are ineligible to receive services in Japan.



Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong)

Hong Kong Automobile Association (HKAA)

Tel: (+852)3583 3638
Internet: <http://www.hkaa.com.hk/>
E-mail: general@hkaa.com.hk



Singapore

Automobile Association of Singapore (AAS)

Tel: (+65)6333 8811
Internet: <http://www.aas.com.sg/>
E-mail: aasmail@aas.com.sg

What if your car hits a wild animal?

Hokkaido is rich in wildlife. Caution is needed while driving as wild animals such as foxes and raccoons may run across the road.

There are many ezo deer in Hokkaido (particularly in eastern Hokkaido.) While ezo deer may look adorable from a distance, they are actually large animals. Some of them weigh more than 100 kg and there have been fatal accidents caused by cars hitting ezo deer crossing the road. If your car hits an ezo deer, it will be an “accident” causing property damage. You certainly should contact the police if this happens (particularly as it will be necessary to “report to the police” to have damage insurance cover the car repairs.) When making a report to the police, you can ask the police to contact the road authorities for that jurisdiction for the removal of the dead deer as it may cause additional accidents if it remains on the road.



Seasons for ezo deer sightings

- **April – June:** Be aware that ezo deer come down to the foot of the mountains from the summit areas where they ordinarily live.
- **October – March:** Watch for ezo deer while driving over the summits. The number of accidents peaks during October and November.

Times of day when most accidents happen that involve ezo deer

- Many accidents happen between 16:00 – 20:00 around sunset, and 4:00 – 6:00 a.m., around dawn

Areas where ezo deer-related accidents happen the most frequently.

A map of accident sites (examples)



A map of ezo deer-related accident sites in Kushiro and Nemuro

Excerpts from the website of Kushiro Development and Construction Department

http://www.ks.hkd.mlit.go.jp/road/etc/shika/shika_top.html

Japanese only



A map of ezo deer-related accident sites in the Kitami City area

Excerpts from the website of Abashiri Development and Construction Department

http://www.ab.hkd.mlit.go.jp/topics/kitami_emosika/

Japanese only



Be careful if you see this road sign.

There are a variety of signs warning of ezo deer crossing the road in addition to the road signs. Most are pictorial signs and they are easy to understand.



Totally lost? Help is here!

Read the “When you drive, be aware of deer!” section in the “Shiretoko Eco-Road” information on the Abashiri Development and Construction Department’s website

http://www.ab.hkd.mlit.go.jp/douro/ecoroad/eco_c_06.html

(English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese and Korean)

