

III Life and Housing

III-1 Looking for housing

1. Applying for Prefectural Housing

Applications for Osaka Prefectural Housing are accepted for specified periods several times a year. Each time, new brochures are issued and distributed at city halls in Osaka Prefecture Information Plazas for prefectural residents, Management Centers, prefectural government annex buildings and other places. Tenants are determined by lottery. Foreign nationals who meet all of the following conditions can apply for prefectural housing:

1. Living with or will live with relatives in Japan.
2. Applicant is living or working in Osaka Prefecture. (Or will work in the Prefecture.)
3. Currently having difficulty finding housing.
4. Earning the income that matches the criteria for application.
5. Has completed alien registration.

Prefectural Housing Application and Screening Group, Osaka Prefectural Housing Supply Public Corporation:

☎ 06-6203-5518 Mon-Fri 9:00-17:45 (Weekdays only)

URL <http://www.osaka-kousha.or.jp>

2. Other Public Housing

City Housing	Housing provided by the city for households whose earnings are lower than the threshold
Public Rental Property Specified by Osaka Prefecture	Housing directly provided by Osaka Prefecture for those with middle-range incomes. ☎ 06-6203-5518
Osaka Prefecture Public Company Rental Housing	Housing managed by Osaka Prefecture Public Company for people with middle-range incomes ☎ 06-6203-5518
UR Housing	Housing built and managed by the Urban Renaissance Agency for people with middle-range income ☎ 06-6968-1717

3. Looking for Private Housing

When you are looking for private housing, clarify your needs, including rent, deposit, area, size of housing and other conditions. Real estate agents (who can introduce you to rented houses and apartment rooms) in the area you plan to reside can introduce you to rental housing. You can advise your desired range and be informed of general housing costs. Also, you can research housing in information magazines. Classified advertisements for housing can also be found in foreign language magazines, such as Kansai Scene, Kansai Flea Market and others. These can also be helpful.

After you decide on the type of housing you will rent, you need to make a rental agreement (contract to lease an apartment room and others) at the real estate agent's office. On such rental agreements, not only the rent, fee for communal services and deposits but also cautions for when you vacate the residence, whether you can have pets and other rules should be clear. Therefore, only sign an agreement after you fully understand the content. It is important to avoid future problems by clarifying when you have to notify (inform your real estate agency) the termination of the contract, the amount they will retain from the deposit money you pay (upfront) and breakdown of the usage of the subtracted deposit.



○Monies Required When Making a Housing Contract

Rent	Monthly rent. You need to pay the rent of the following month. Therefore, you need to pay rent for two months up front.
Maintenance Fee (for housing complexes)	Residents pay monthly to cover the costs of the cleaning and maintenance of communal spaces
Deposit	When a tenant makes a contract, s/he pays deposits to guarantee paying the rent to landlord (the owner of the property). In the Kansai area, average deposits are equivalent to about a month to 3 months rent, and they are used for house maintenance or other purposes. When a tenant moves out, typically 30% to 50% of deposit money is subtracted.
Service Fee	Key money is a non-refundable gratuity payment to the landlord.
Commission	Commission you pay to the real estate agent.

III-2 Moving Out and Leaving Japan

1. Procedures at Where You Lived before Moving

When you move out of a rented property, you must pay the water, gas, and electricity utility bills. Call each utility company to notify them of your planned vacancy date and ask them for a fee settlement. Similarly, call the telephone company (dial 116) and inform them of your new address. Additionally, submit a notice of vacancy to the post office nearest your residence, so that all incoming mail will be transferred to your new address - free of charge for the entire following year.

If you move to a place governed by a different municipality to that of your prior abode, please hand in a "Notice of Ineligibility" to the National Health Insurance division in the ward office or town/city hall and return your insurance card to the division.

2. After moving into a new residence

Contact the gas and electricity companies. The gas company will send a person to open the gas line for the house, and will require a resident to observe this. Generally, if you turn the breaker on, the electricity becomes available for use, but you must notify the electric company as soon as possible when you start using electricity. Water systems are different in each house/apartment, so ask the landlord.

Have the address on your alien registration card changed at the local municipal office of your new residence within 14 days after your move. If you are insured by National Health Insurance, after notifying them of the transfer of your address, apply for it in your new municipality.

If you have a driver's license, have your address changed at a police station.

3. When You Leave Japan

1. Settle all bills regarding the rented property. Pay utility bills for gas, electricity, water and national and international phone calls.
2. If you are leaving Japan in the middle of the fiscal year, it is necessary to settle taxes due. With regards to the residential tax, pay the entire amount for the fiscal year at your municipal office. Local taxes are calculated based on the previous year's income, so you need to pay the tax even if you will not remain in Japan for the full fiscal year.
3. Regarding income tax, you can still receive a refund after filing your final income tax return, if you organize for a person to manage your tax payment and report this to the tax office. Or, file a tentative income tax return and pay all unpaid income tax for the year before you leave Japan.
4. Regarding National Health Insurance, about a month before you leave Japan, please report the withdrawal to the municipal office, settle the account and follow all proper procedures.
5. If you are a member of the national pension system, you can request a lump sum withdrawal payment after you leave Japan. Obtain an application form at a Social Insurance Office or your work place.
6. Hand in your alien registration card to an immigration officer when you leave Japan.

III-3 Water Supply

You can drink the tap water in Japan, including Osaka. After you move in to a residence, you need to apply for a water supply.

1. Application

There will be a water supply application card for new users located near the front door of your home or somewhere else nearby. Inform the Waterworks Department (Bureau) of your municipality of the number on the card (this number is referred to as the Shiyosha Bango). Subsequent to your contacting the Waterworks Department (Bureau), a waterworks employee will open the water line to your home. It can take up to four days from the time you apply to the time you can actually use water, so it is recommended that you apply as soon as possible. In a rented flat or apartment, associations of the building or the landlord may take necessary procedures for your supply water.



2. Water Rates

Water rates are comprised of the sum of the basic charge and a charge proportionate to the amount used. Usually, the water bill comes once every two months and arrives by post. Payment can be made at your local public office, by automatic payment from your bank account, by transfer from a financial institution or at certain convenience stores. This varies depending on municipality. Note that inability to pay can result in having your water turned off.

If sewers are available in your community, you will also be charged for their use. In communal housing, normally the management association charges the sewer cost in the water bill after calculating the water supply to your household.

3. Points of Concern in Winter

Water pipes can freeze or break on the coldest of winter days. On such days, it is necessary to take certain precautionary measures, such as running a small amount of water at night.

III-4 Electricity

1. Electricity in Japan

Electricity in Japan is provided at a stable voltage of 100 Volts. Depending on the region, the frequency can be 50Hz (in the East Japan) or 60Hz (in the West Japan). Incidentally, the Osaka region is 60Hz.

If you use an electric appliance taken from abroad, because of the frequency difference, the performance of some electrical appliances or tools may be impaired, they may not be able to be used and could breakdown, so please be cautious.

2. Application for Electrical Service

In order to apply for electricity services, please call the customer service department in your nearest Kansai Electric Power Company office after you have pulled the main breaker. The main breaker is usually located in an electricity distribution box (which stores all of the leakage and safety breakers necessary for safe electricity use) on the wall in the entrance way or kitchen. A contact voucher will be in either of these locations. Apply by either phoning the number on the voucher or sending the attached postcard to the office noted on the voucher.

3. Payment

A monthly bill will be sent to you according to the meter-reading result. You can pay at various locations such as your local Kansai Electric Power Company office, financial institutions or a convenience store, so take the necessary steps to make payments when you receive bills. Also, you may establish automatic payment from your bank account.

4. Notice of the Amount of Electricity Used

The image shows a Japanese electricity bill with several English annotations pointing to specific sections:

- Notice of the Amount of Electricity Used. It is delivered when the meter is checked.** (Points to the top header section)
- Customer Number (Contract number with the customer. Use it for inquiries)** (Points to the customer ID: 08141967010100)
- Amount used in the last month** (Points to the usage amount: 351kWh)
- Date of withdrawing the fee from your bank/postal savings account** (Points to the withdrawal date: 8月20日)
- Final due date of payment for this bill (if payment is made after this date, a late charge will be added to the next month's bill)** (Points to the final due date: 8月31日)
- Amount received (amount received during the previous month for those paying through their bank/postal savings account)** (Points to the amount received: 377円)
- Next date for checking the meter** (Points to the next meter check date: 9月8日)
- Contact telephone number** (Points to the contact number: 06-391-1061)
- Electricity bill (fee for reference, calculated from the amount of the fuel used in the past month)** (Points to the bill amount: 2214円)
- This month's charge** (Points to the current month's charge: 2214円)
- Type of contract** (Points to the contract type: 従量40kVA)
- Last month's charge** (Points to the last month's charge: 310kWh)
- Adjustment amount of fuel expenses (amount to adjust in case of the exchange rate and/or fuel cost changes more than a certain level)** (Points to the fuel adjustment amount: 0円)

Cooperated by Kansai Electric Power Co., Inc.

III-5 Gas

1. Types of Gas

There are two types of gas: one is called city gas and is delivered by pipe to homes and buildings. The other is propane gas, in tanks placed near houses or other places. The equipment used differs with respect to the gas. It is very dangerous to use equipment that does not suit the gas type. Please confirm what type of gas you are using with your landlord or a local gas company.

(1) City Gas

The meter for city gas is located outside your residence. The contact phone number for a new contract is written on the meter, so when you apply for new gas service, please phone the number. When you make a phone call, you will be asked your address, name, the first day date from when you wish to use gas service, preferable appointment time with a worker who will visit your house, and other details.

Usually on the day after you call, a gas technician visits you to open the gas line. You need to stay at home to receive the technician's visit.

(2) Propane Gas

Even in the areas where propane gas is provided, just as with city gas, there is a tag on the meter, with a contact number to call. Please dial the number when you apply for propane gas services. A fuel shop delivers the propane gas in tanks. Please note that you will not be able to use the same appliances and equipment used for city gas ones when using propane.

2. Gas Leakage

Gas gives off odor, so you can smell the gas when it leaks. When you suspect a gas leak, immediately turn off the gas at the main and report the suspected leak to the gas company.

Report suspected city gas leak (Gas leak hotline, Osaka Gas.
Japanese only.)

Osaka City ☎: 0120-0-19424

Osaka Prefecture (south) ☎: 0120-3-19424

Osaka Prefecture (northeast) ☎: 0120-5-19424

3. Receipt of the gas fee transferred from the customer's bank/postal savings account

Receipt of the gas fee withdrawn from the customer's bank/postal savings account

ガスご使用量のお知らせ(兼)
ガス料金等領収済のお知らせ

Your Name

Date fee will be withdrawn

Receipt of the gas fee withdrawn from the customer's bank/postal savings account

Amount of gas used and the amount of fee received

Classification applied to the amount of gas usage

Basic fee + (Unit Price on Fee Classification X Amount of Used Gas)

Next date for checking the meter

The balance of the fee added with a 3% penalty, if the payment is made more than 20 days after the checking date.

Meter reading at this and the previous reading

Dates of checking the meter this month and last month

Type of contract

Amount of gas used since the last check.

Telephone number for inquiries

おなまえ

13A.46.04659MJ (11,000キロカロリ)

ご使用番号

ガス料金等口座振替済領収証

振替日 振替日 振替日

ご使用量

領収金額

①早取料金	円	分割払器具代金当目	円
②遅取・早取料金差額	円	分割払器具代金戻額	円
③消費税等相当額	円	分割払器具代金戻額	円
④分割払器具代金	円	リース契約費	円
⑤警報器リース代金	円	リース契約費	円
⑥その他リース代金	円		

ガスご使用量のお知らせ

次月検計日

当月検計日 当回メーター指示数

前月検計日 前回メーター指示数

当月ご使用量

前年同月ご使用量

当月請求予定金額(※)

①早取料金

②消費税等相当額

③分割払器具代金

④警報器リース代金

⑤その他リース代金

適用単位料金のお知らせ

大阪ガス

フリーダイヤル

お引越し等のご連絡

お電話番号は正確におかけ間違いのないようお願いします。

http://www.osakagas.co.jp/

협력:오사카가스 주식회사

III-6 Garbage

1. Garbage Disposal

Separate garbage collection is carried out in order to reduce its amount and aid recycling

Types of garbage separation

- Flammable garbage
- Non-flammable garbage
- Newspapers, magazines, cans and PET bottles

If you do not follow the rules or proper method regarding garbage disposal, it may cause you to get into trouble with your neighbors.

Things you should not do

1. Dispose of garbage on non-garbage-collection days.
2. Dispose of garbage outside the designated area.
3. Dispose of garbage without sorting.

The exact rules and types of garbage to be sorted out are different depending on municipality, so we recommend asking someone at the ward office, city/town hall or even your neighbors about this. Some public offices offer explanations regarding garbage disposal rules in foreign languages.

2. How to Dispose of Other Types of Garbage

(1) Batteries, Drinking Bottles and Other Types

Batteries contain dangerous substances and require special care and technology for their disposal. Therefore, they should essentially be returned to the collection box at the store in which they were purchased. Moreover, some stores refund money on beer, juice/soda bottles and others, so it is recommended that you confirm this at the store when purchasing.

(2) Plastic Film Packaging

Please collect plastic containers, wrapping films and PET bottles in a bag and dispose of them on the designated day.

(3) Large-Sized Garbage

Furniture and appliances no longer used (except for air-conditioners, TVs, refrigerators and washing machines: rules for these items are mentioned below) should be collected either on a designated day as "large-sized garbage" or taken away upon special request. Some municipalities may charge for collection of large-sized garbage.

(4) Air conditioners, TV sets, refrigerators, washing machines, tumble dryers

When you dispose of an air conditioner, a television, a refrigerator, a washing machine and/or a tumble dryer you must contact the shop you bought it from (or the shop you are going to buy a new one from) to take them away for a certain charge. Manufacturers will recycle these appliances. Municipalities do not collect them.

(For your information) Home Appliances Recycling Law

URL http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/kaden_recycle/ (English and Chinese)

III-7 Manners for Living in Japan

1. Adapting to Japanese Society

The observance of Japanese manners and customs, and an understanding of the Japanese way of living makes things easier when living here. It is recommended that you gain an understanding of these little by little.

- When you have an appointment with others, you should keep the time agreed. If you might be late or need to cancel, you should make contact in advance.
- Japanese people bow in many situations by bending over and lowering your head.
- It is rude to ask personal questions (regarding occupation, income, family matters etc) if your relationship is not very close to the person you are speaking with.
- When requesting something of someone else, emphatically demanding or being overly self-assertive will tend to offend people.

2. Communicating with neighbors

(1) Greetings

It's important to offer greetings to those in your neighborhood. Your daily greetings will give you the opportunity to facilitate subsequent communication. In addition to this, it is also said that offering greetings to each other can also help to prevent crime in the area.

(2) Noise

In the city, there are some people who are sensitive to daily noise. They may not even tolerate the noise of children. Especially be careful if you live in communal housing such as an apartment building. Generally, please refrain from making noises audible enough to your neighbors after 10pm. Some people work nights, and therefore spend daytime hours at home sleeping.

The structure of buildings in Japan can mean that even though you believe you are being quiet, you may well be being noisy. Especially, late at night take special care and avoid using vacuum cleaners or washing machines. When possible, avoid closing and opening doors firmly – especially late at night/very early morning.

If you are bothered by loud noises, and you live in communal housing, it is suggested that you consult with the real estate agent with whom you have made a contract. If your residence is not a communal one, it is recommended to consult with a board member of the neighborhood committee, a neighbor, etc.

(3) Neighborhood Committee (Town Community Association)

In each local community, local organizations including the neighborhood committee and others autonomously hold activities such as trying to promote ties among neighbors, clean ups and crime prevention. Usually they hold events in the community through various get-togethers, cleanup events of public areas and many other endeavors.

Participation in the neighborhood committee is completely voluntary. However, if you join you can easily obtain information about the local municipality administration, you will be appreciated by your neighbors, and thus it can be beneficial to participate. Furthermore, if you and neighbors get acquainted with each other, it can be useful for crime prevention, so please join in these activities as much as possible.

(4) Circular

After you join the neighborhood association, you will receive a circular ("Kairanban"). The typical circular is an information page from the municipality office bound to a clipboard. Your neighbor will bring it to you, and after reading it, please affix your hanko (personal seal) or signature on it and bring it to the next person's house. It is probably best to ask to whom you should bring circulars to when you receive them.

(5) Cleaning

Some community or apartment buildings have a set day when citizens clean up the areas around your house, roads, nearby parks or other places. On these days, at least one member from each household participates in cleaning or weeding. Do not miss participation in such cleaning events since it is an opportunity to enhance ties with neighbors, and meet people that have different working hours to you, and who you rarely see on a day to day basis.

III-8 When you face problems in life

Systems below are for the people with difficulties in their life. For details, please ask at the welfare division of municipality. (Appendix page 62 IX-1)

(1) Local Welfare/Juvenile Committee

The Committee members give consultation to people having trouble earning a living, elderly people living alone, bedridden elderly people, single parent families and people with disabilities. The committee also offers necessary assistance to these people and cooperates with welfare offices and related government organizations. The committee also consults and gives advice on issues related to children.

(2) Welfare Benefits

Even if you use all of your property (assets), with all of your abilities, other systems or measures and support from your relatives, and still have trouble supporting yourself, please consult the Protection Division (hogo-ka) of your municipality. The division will make an attempt to offer necessary protection depends on the degree of poverty.

(3) Living Expenses Loan

There are loan schemes for families in poverty to borrow living funds for living costs and also for emergency support.

