

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

①Make 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.

②Dial 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.

③Dial 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.

④Contact 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

Road accidents - even if it is self-inflicted accident and the car is drivable - must be reported to the police and also the car rental company.

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.

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"

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.



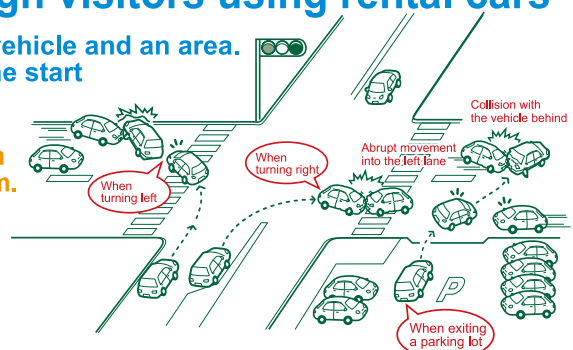
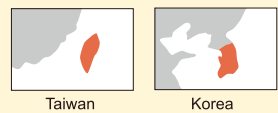
Status of accidents involving foreign visitors using rental cars

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."



Quick Tip

Fire and Disaster Management Agency "A guide for ambulance services" (Japanese, English, Simplified Chinese and Korean)
http://www.fdma.go.jp/html/life/kyuukyusya_manual/pdf/2011/english.pdf



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.

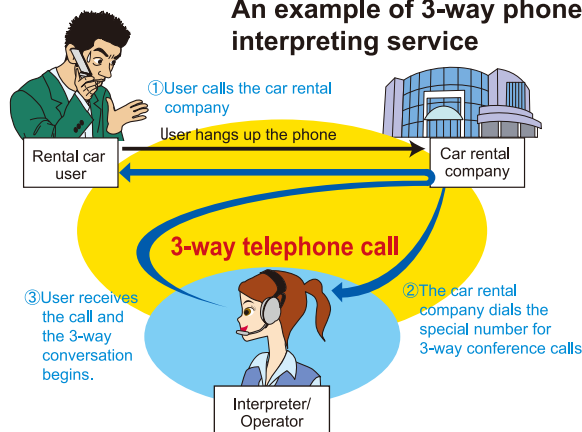


There is 3-Way Phone Interpreting Service!

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.

Before you leave your country, check with your cell phone service provider as to whether your cell phone is set up for international roaming. Cell phones can be rented at airports and other places, if your own cell phone does not work in Hokkaido.



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

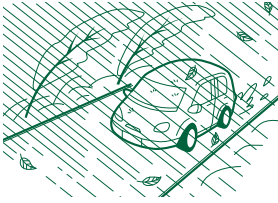
Blizzards

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 (Japanese and English)
<http://www.jma.go.jp/jma/indexe.html>



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 (Japanese, English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese and Korean)
<http://northern-road.jp/navi/eng/index.htm>



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 (Japanese and English)
<http://info-road.hdb.hkd.mlit.go.jp/en/>



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 (Japanese, English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese and Korean)
<http://www.new-chitose-airport.jp/en/>

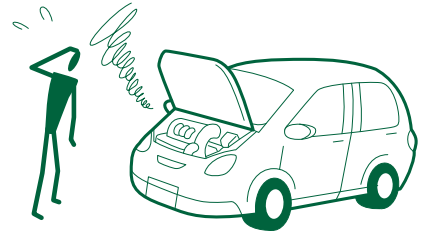


Operating conditions for the railways are available only in Japanese but it can be useful to check the headings.
JR Hokkaido (Japanese, English, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese and Korean)
<http://www.jrhokkaido.co.jp/webunkou/>



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

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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

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3. Hassle-free late returns

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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 any automobile club that is part of the “Global Service” of Federation Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA) have the same privileges as those of JAF members when using JAF’s road services. 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.

Global 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 80 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.



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Hong Kong Automobile Association (HKAA)

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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.

Excerpts from the website of Kushiro Development and Construction Department (Japanese, English and Traditional Chinese)
http://www.ks.hkd.mlit.go.jp/road/etc/shika/shika_map/shika_map_2016_e.pdf



Caution! Wild Animals Crossing



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.