

# Marriage in Japan

## Can I Get Married While Serving in Japan?

If you wish to marry in Japan, you will do so according to Japanese law. Marriage in Japan consists of a civil marriage registration by the couple at a Japanese municipal government office. Only this civil registration constitutes a legal marriage in Japan. Ceremonies performed by religious or fraternal bodies in Japan, while perhaps more meaningful for you, are not legal marriages.

Army personnel do not need command permission before getting married. However, you should consult AR 55-6 and AR 614-30 to ensure eligibility for command sponsorship.

## Who Can Get Married in Japan?

Under Japanese law, you must meet the following requirement to get married.

The male partner must be 18 years of age or older and the female partner must be 16 years of age or older.

In addition, for Americans, you must be able to legally marry in your home state; if the legal age of marriage at home is 18, you cannot marry earlier than that in Japan.

A woman cannot get married within 100 days of her divorce from her previous marriage. (\*Exceptional process is available if you can obtain the evidence that certifies the wife is not pregnant from previous marriage)

Most people related by blood, by adoption or through other marriages cannot get married in Japan.

A person who is under 20 years of age cannot get married in Japan without parent's approval.

Currently, same sex marriage is not accepted in Japan.

## Getting Married

Once all the paperwork is completed (see below), proceed to the appropriate Japanese municipal government office. If either party is Japanese, use the city hall or ward office where the Japanese citizen's address register is maintained. If both are non-Japanese, both parties go to the city hall nearest their residence with someone fluent in Japanese and English.

For those residing on Camp Zama, the Zama City Hall will assist you. Those residing in the Sagami-hara Family Housing Area or Sagami Depot would go to Sagami-hara City Hall. Do not go to city hall without a translator if both parties are non-Japanese.

The municipal government office issues a Japanese language "Certificate of Acceptance of Notification of Marriage" (婚姻受理証明書Kon-in Todoke Juri Shomeisho).

You are now legally married. There are two versions of the “Certificate Acceptance of Notification of Marriage”, small and large version. The smaller version cost 350 Yen and the larger version cost 1500 Yen (price are subject to change). You may want to get several copies of the small certificate to keep for your records. Write down the name and address of the municipal government office that registered your marriage, as you’ll need to contact them directly in the future to obtain proof of your marriage.

If one party is Japanese, you will get a New Family Registry (新戸籍 Shin Koseki) and it usually takes one week to be issued.

## Documents Needed

**Proof of Nationality:** Passport is recommended. Birth Certificate (**with translation**), Certificate of Naturalization, Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or Certificate of Citizenship are also acceptable with translation.

**Affidavit of Competency to Marry (for non-Japanese):** The form is available at the Legal Assistance Office and must be notarized. Japanese translation is necessary, however, need not be notarized as long as the translator indicates name, address with the imprint of translator’s personal seal (Hanko) or signature for non-Japanese. The name of spelling and signature of the affidavit must match with the ones on the proof of nationality (usually the passport).

**Marriage Registration Form (Konin Todoke):** This can be picked up at the city hall or ward office where you are submitting. Two witnesses of any nationality over 20 years old must sign this document. Generally non-Japanese witnesses will sign, while Japanese, Korean, and Chinese national witnesses may be asked for their personal seal (Hanko). Non-Japanese witnesses are required to show their valid passport.

**Letters of consent for minors:** A person who is under 20 years old must have a parent’s approval. You also need to bring an abstract of marriage law in the state you claim to prove that you can marry under 20 years of age in your legal resident state. Both consent form and abstract should be translated into Japanese.

**Family register must be current:** If the city hall you’re submitting your documents is other than that of a family register of a Japanese spouse is maintained.

## Translations:

Required documents must be presented with clear and complete translations into Japanese. Translations are the responsibility of the parties getting married. List of translators are available at the Legal Assistance Office, in case you cannot find anyone to get your documents translated. Military One Source provides free translation services to eligible users. Please check your eligibility status and types of documents which can be translated.

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/confidential-help/interactive-tools-services/language-services/document-translation-services-from-military-onesource>

## For the American Partner

All foreigners who marry in Japan must first prepare a sworn **Affidavit of Competency to Marry** (婚姻用件具備証明書Konin Yoken Gubi Shomeisho), affirming they are legally free to marry. This form is available in the Legal Assistance Office. The form must be notarized and translated into Japanese. You may translate the document yourself, or ask for a list of translators at the Legal Assistance Office. If your partner is also an American, she/he must also complete a sworn Affidavit of Competency to Marry.

### For the Japanese Partner

If s/he reports the marriage at a different city hall where s/he permanent domicile is, Japanese citizen needs a certified copy of her/his Certificate of All Records, as known as Family Register (戸籍全部事項証明書 Koseki Zenbu Jiko Shomei-sho). Also, his/her personal seal (Hanko) and a government issued photo ID or 2 forms of non-photo ID are required.

### For Other Foreign Partners residing in Japan

If your partner is neither Japanese nor American, s/he should contact her/his embassy for the marriage procedures needed in their own country. Some countries require back-home records checks and waiting periods.

- If your partner is a resident card holder in Japan, s/he needs to bring the **Resident Card** (在留カード Zairyu Ka-do). A Resident Card is issued by the Immigration Bureau in Japan. The certified copy of **Residential Registration Certificate** (住民票 Jyumin Hyo) is also needed to prove the current domicile.
- If your partner is on special permanent resident status in Japan (特別永住者 Tokubetsu Eijyu-sha), s/he needs to obtain **Special Permanent Resident Certificate** (特別永住者証明書 Tokubetsu Eijyu-sha Shoumei-sho). This certificate is issued by the city hall where her/his current address is registered.
- As for an **Affidavit of Competency to Marry**, s/he needs to request it from her/his native country.

### After You are Married

You need to have someone translate your Certificate of Acceptance of Notification of Marriage into English. If your partner is Japanese national, you need to translate a new family register into English also. Once this is done, bring your translator and the translations to the Legal Assistance Office to have translator's signature notarized.

**Translators need to sign in front of notary.**

You must also present your Certificate of Acceptance of Notification of Marriage to your command to initiate command sponsorship and logistical support.

Please be aware that the city hall/ward office processed your marriage is the only place who can issue the certify copy of your Certificate of Acceptance of Marriage. Currently, Zama city hall does not mail it to abroad.

**Scan the QR codes below with your smartphone to go directly to our websites.**

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USARJ LAO Website



Ice Comment



**Marriage in Japan** is distributed by the Camp Zama Legal Assistance Office, located in Building 101, Room CE209. Our office hours are 0830 to 1630 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, 0830 to 1200. You may call us for an appointment at DSN 262-4698 or commercial 046-407-4698.