

Chapter 3 Housing



Saitama's Prefectural Mascot
Kobaton

- 1 Private Rental Housing
- 2 Prefectural Public Housing
- 3 Moving
- 4 Buying Real Estate

1 Private Rental Housing

When looking for a place to rent, you should consult with a real estate agent in the area in which you want to live. Once you have decided where you want to live, you will sign a lease contract with the landlord. An understanding of Japanese customs is important to ensure that your move goes as smoothly as possible.

A Guide to Rental Housing and Rules for Living in Japan

(Saitama Prefectural Government International Division website: In Japanese, English, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese)

Website: <https://www.pref.saitama.lg.jp/a0306/tabunkakyousei/sumaisupport.html>

(1) Information on Rental Housing

Rent and Management Fee	① Rent is paid in advance every month. ② You may also need to pay additional fees, such as management fees or building management fees.
Size of House and Rooms	① The size of a residence is indicated by the total square meters (m²) of floor space. This includes not only living areas, but also the toilet, bathroom and kitchen. ② The size of each room is indicated by the number of tatami mats that can be laid on the floor. One <i>jo</i> (tatami mat) is typically about 1.6m². ③ The rooms are categorized as either Japanese or Western style. Terms such as DK (dining area + kitchen) and LDK (living room + dining area + kitchen) are also widely used. ④ The area of the house and the grounds is measured in units called <i>tsubo</i>. 1 <i>tsubo</i> is approximately 3.3 m².
Utilities	① Basic wiring and piping for electricity, water and gas are supplied. However, to use these utilities, the tenant must contact the respective companies. ② Residences typically do not come furnished, nor are gas ranges, ovens, or light fixtures provided. You must obtain these by yourself.
Access to Transportation	This is indicated in number of minutes from the nearest station (e.g. A 15-minute walk from Urawa Station).

(2) Before Entering into a Lease Contract

When you rent a house or apartment, you will sign a contract. This is called a lease contract.

A lease contract clearly specifies the rights and obligations of both the tenant and landlord.

Your signature on such a contract is legally binding and indicates that you agree to and will abide by the terms and conditions listed therein. Read over the contract carefully, and ask for an explanation of its contents. It is imperative that you understand the contents of the contract before signing.

When entering into a lease contract, you are required to have an official copy of your Resident Record, your Residence Card, a certificate of income and your name seal registration certificate, as well as a guarantor or written oath.

(3) Types of Lease Contracts

Regular lease contract	When the term of the contract expires, in principle, the same contract will be renewed (the same contract will be continued). When you renew your contract, contract renewal fees and other renewal fees may be charged.
Fixed-term lease contract	Once the term of the contract expires, the same contract will not be renewed. You may enter into another contract (a new contract) to rent the same apartment. To sign another contract, you will need to pay a realtor's fee, etc.

(4) Payment Required when Entering into a Lease Contract

Rent (<i>yachin</i>)	Rent is paid a month in advance for the following month. Therefore, when first moving into a property, you have to pay 2 months' rent (the current and the following month). Rent is usually paid by bank transfer.
Deposit (<i>shikikin</i>)	A deposit of 1-3 months' rent is given to the landlord when you sign the lease contract. This money is used to pay any outstanding rent and expenses for repairing the property when a tenant moves out. The remaining balance, if any, is refunded to you.
Key Money (<i>reikin</i>)	Generally, 1-2 months' rent is paid to the landlord as key money. This money is non-refundable.
Realtor's Fee (<i>chūkairyō</i>)	This is the commission paid to the real estate agent. In principle, the tenant and landlord each pay the equivalent of half a month's rent, to total 1 month's rent. However, if both parties agree, the proportion paid by each party may be changed.

(5) General Terms and Conditions of a Lease Contract

Guarantor	Often you need to have a guarantor when applying for a lease. If you do not have a guarantor, you may discuss the option of using a guarantor company with the real estate agent.
Payment of Rent	Rent must be paid 1 month in advance by the date stated in the lease contract.

A Guide to Living in Saitama

Occupants	You cannot allow anyone outside of your family to live with you without the prior consent of your landlord.
Subletting	You cannot sublet any or all of the property to a third party.
Renovating and Redecorating	You must obtain your landlord's permission before remodeling or renovating the premises.
Lease Termination	When terminating a lease prior to its full term, you must notify your landlord of your intention to do so as early as possible. If you leave without notifying your landlord, or you notify them right before you leave, your deposit may not be refunded.
Conditions for the End of the Lease	Be aware that there are instances where deposits are not returned and high cleaning charges are made at the end of leases. You should agree to what fees will be required at the end of the lease before you sign.
Pets	Most landlords do not allow pets. Therefore, if you wish to keep a pet, please clarify this point with the real estate agent and check if the contract allows a tenant to keep a pet before entering into the lease contract.



Consultations and Inquiries

Finding a Real Estate Agent to Help You Find a Home

Website	Link
Saitama Prefecture Housing Support Network (A list of real estate agents)	https://www.sasn.jp/search/

Consultations on Lease Contracts

Topics	Office	Phone	Reception Hours (Excluding National Holidays and the New Year's holiday period)
• Rental contracts • Advice on problems related to living in or moving out of housing	Housing Consultation Plaza, Saitama Housing Supply Corporation	048-658-3017	Daily (Excluding the New Year's holiday period) 10:00 - 18:00
	Saitama Real Estate Transaction Association	048-811-1818	Mon, Wed, Fri 10:00 - 12:00 13:00 - 15:00
	All Japan Real Estate Association, Saitama Headquarters	048-866-5225	Mon - Fri 9:00 - 16:00
• Rental contracts • Real estate agents	Construction Safety Division, Saitama Prefectural Government	048-830-5488	Mon - Fri 9:00 - 11:45 13:00 - 16:30

2 Prefectural Public Housing

Saitama Prefecture provides public housing for low-income residents. Tenants are selected through a lottery system if there is a large number of applicants. Applications are accepted during the months of January, April, July, and October.

Individuals meeting the following requirements are able to apply:

- If you are a foreign resident, you need to have an appropriate status of residence (mid- to long-term resident, etc.).
- You must be able to demonstrate that you need help finding adequate housing
- You have family (a spouse, or 1st degree kinship) living with you (Except if applying for an individual residence).
- You reside or work in Saitama Prefecture.
- The income of your household is at or below the designated amount.
- You have paid your prefectural and municipal inhabitant tax.

A Guide to Living in Saitama

- You are not behind in payment of rent or damage compensation owed to public housing (housing developed by regional public groups, the Urban Renaissance Agency, or a local housing corporation).
- You or the members of your household are not part of an organized crime group

For further details, please contact the Saitama Housing Supply Corporation at 048-829-2875.



Consultations and Inquiries

Office	Phone	Reception Hours (Excluding National Holidays and the New Year's holiday period)
Prefectural Housing Division, Head Office, Saitama Housing Supply Corporation	048-829-2875	Mon - Fri 8:30 - 17:15
Housing Consultation Plaza, Saitama Housing Supply Corporation (In the JR Omiya Station West Exit concourse)	048-658-3017	Daily (Excluding the New Year's holiday period) 10:00 - 18:00

Some of the municipalities within Saitama also offer public housing. For details, contact your nearest municipal or ward office.

3 Moving

Below are some of the various matters you need to consider when moving. In order to make your move go smoothly, please read over the list and complete the necessary procedures.

Topic	Before Moving	After Moving
Moving In/Moving Out Notification	Before moving, file a Moving Out Notification at the municipal (ward) office of your current residence, and obtain a Moving Out Certificate.	File a Moving In Notification to the municipal (ward) office of your new residence within 14 days of moving.
Electricity	Contact your current power supply company and the company you will be using at your new place of residence.	Turn on the main switch of the circuit breaker, molded case circuit breaker, and earth leakage circuit breaker.
Water	Contact the water divisions of your current and new municipal or ward offices.	N/A
Gas	Contact your current gas company to shut off the gas valve. Contact the gas company that you will be using at your new place of residence.	Ask the gas company to turn on the gas valve and to conduct necessary safety inspections.
Phone	Inform your current phone company of your move.	N/A
Post	Submit a mail forwarding form to a post office. The post office will forward mail to your new address for 1 year.	N/A
Driver's License	N/A	Register your change of address with the Driver's License Center or any police station (Excluding the Konosu Police Station). Refer to page 10-4. Saitama Prefectural Police Department Driver's License Center ☎048-543-2001

A Guide to Living in Saitama

Topic	Before Moving	After Moving
Name Seal Registration	N/A	If you move to a different municipality, register your name seal at the municipal (ward) office of your new residence.
Elementary and Junior High School	• When you file a Moving Out Notification, notify your local municipal office that your child is attending elementary or junior high school. • Request a school certificate (<i>zaigaku shomeisho</i>) and a textbook list from your child's current school.	• When you file a Moving In Notification, notify the office that your child is attending elementary or junior high school. • Submit the school certificate and the textbook list to the new school.
NHK Broadcast Subscription Fee	For people who have a TV Have you made a contract with NHK broadcasting? Website: http://www.nhk-cs.jp/jushinryo/ ☎0120-151515	

4 Buying Real Estate

For specific details about buying real estate or obtaining a home loan, talk to your nearest real estate agent or financial institution.



Consultations and Inquiries

Topic	Office	Phone	Reception Hours (Excluding National Holidays and the New Year's holiday period)
• Contracts for buying or selling real estate • Housing construction	Housing Consultation Plaza, Saitama Housing Supply Corporation	048-658-3017	Daily (Excluding the New Year's holiday period) 10:00 - 18:00
• Contracts for buying or selling real estate	Association of Real Estate Agents of Japan	03-5733-2271	Mon-Fri 9:00 - 17:00 *Answering machine 11:30 - 12:30
	Saitama Real Estate Transaction Association	048-811-1818	Mon, Wed, Fri 9:00 - 12:00 13:00 - 15:00
	All Japan Real Estate Association, Saitama Headquarters	048-866-5225	Mon - Fri 10:00 - 16:00
• Contracts for buying or selling real estate • Real estate agents	Construction Safety Division, Saitama Prefectural Government	048-830-5488	Mon - Fri 9:00 - 11:45 13:00 - 16:30