

General rules

Q1: What specifically has changed about the special permanent resident system?

A: With the introduction of the residency management system in July 9, 2012, the Alien Registration Law and alien registration certificates were discontinued. In light of the important role served by alien registration certificates issued to special permanent residents in certifying their legal status, etc., the Minister of Justice now issues similar certificate, the special permanent resident certificate.

The details shown on the special permanent resident certificate have been kept to the required minimum and have been significantly reduced compared to the details shown on the alien registration certificate. This means that procedures such as alterations to the details and reissuance will be handled at municipalities as before.

Furthermore, requirements of the re-entry permit system have been eased. A person who has a valid passport and a special permanent resident certificate will be in principle exempt from needing a re-entry permit when re-entering Japan within two years from the date of departure (see Note).

Special permanent residents will still be subject to the Basic Residents' Register System.

Note: In this case, please do not forget to check "Departure With Special Re-entry Permission" on your "embarkation card for reentrant."

Q2: Where can I get a special permanent resident certificate?

A: Certificates are issued at municipalities as before.

*In the case of special permanent residency permitted by Article 5 of the Special Act on Immigration Control, certificates will be issued at the regional immigration bureau.

Q3: How long is the validity period of the special permanent resident certificate?

A: For persons under 16 years of age: The special permanent resident certificate is valid until the date of their 16th birthday.

For persons 16 years of age and older: In the case that a new special permanent resident certificate is issued after application for renewal of period of validity, the new certificate will be valid until the date of one's seventh birthday after the expiration of the old special permanent resident certificate. In the case that a new special permanent resident certificate is issued for reasons other than an application for renewal of period of validity, the certificate will be valid until the date of one's seventh birthday after the date of notification or application.

Q4: Do I need to always carry the special permanent resident certificate with me?

A: You are not required to always carry the special permanent resident certificate on your person.

However, if you are requested by an immigration official, etc. to present your special permanent resident certificate, you must present it; for example, the official may accompany you to the place where the certificate is kept.

Q5: Special permanent residents are not obligated to carry a passport or their special permanent resident certificate with them, so what happens in the following case? For example, a special permanent resident lives in Osaka but is in Tokyo on business and is questioned by a police officer. When asked to present his/her special permanent resident certificate, he/she cannot because it was left at home. The person would present the certificate if they had it with them and is not refusing the request intentionally. Would the person be subject to penalties?

A: The crime of refusing to present a special permanent resident certificate applies to cases in which the person intentionally denies requests for presentation - for example, cases in which a person makes outwardly clear his/her intent to deny a request for presentation of certificate by a person with authority, or a case in which a person deliberately refuses to present the certificate within a reasonable period of time.

This “reasonable period of time” is determined according to the individual circumstances of specific cases. Possible examples of such circumstances include the positional relationship between the location in which a person is requested to present the special permanent resident certificate and the location in which the certificate is kept, or the presence and degree of barriers to presenting said certificate. Note that if there is an alternative method other than presentation of the special permanent resident certificate through which the status of the concerned special permanent resident can be confirmed, it is possible that he/she may not be requested to present the special permanent resident certificate.

Q6: Special permanent residents are not obligated to always carry their special permanent resident certificate on them. Since I have a driver’s license for ID and a special permanent residency permit, so I don't think I need a special permanent resident certificate. Do I still have to obtain one? Will there be penalties if I don't?

A: Currently in Japan there are a large number of illegal residents, and even for special permanent residents there are cases in which it is necessary to ascertain their status, etc., just as with other foreigners. This is why special permanent resident certificates are issued and why special permanent residents are required to receive one.

Note that those in violation of the obligation to receive a special permanent resident certificate may be imprisoned for up to one year or fined up to 200,000 yen.

Q7: What things have become more convenient with the changes made to the special permanent resident system? Has the re-entry permit system also changed?

A: The details shown on the special permanent resident certificate have been kept to the required minimum and have been significantly reduced compared to the details shown on the alien registration certificate. This means that there are fewer occasions on which one must carry out procedures to change the details. Note that procedures such as alterations to the details and reissuance will be handled at municipalities as before.

Also, requirements of the re-entry permit system have been eased. A person who has a valid passport and special permanent resident certificate will be in principle exempt from needing a re-entry permit when re-entering Japan within two years from the date of departure (see Note). For information regarding persons requiring exceptional re-entry permission, please check Q149 of the Q&A regarding the new residency management system.

Note: In such cases, please do not forget to check “Departure With Special Re-entry Permission” on your “embarkation card for reentrant.”

Issuance: Answers

Q8: Are special permanent resident certificates issued on the day of application procedures?

A: Special permanent resident certificates are issued anew at municipalities after first being prepared by the Minister of Justice based on your application at that municipality, so they will not be issued on the day of your application. This includes issuance for those under the age of 16 as well.

Note that efforts are being made at the Ministry of Justice to shorten the time until certificates are received so that they can be issued in the shortest amount of time possible.

Q9: After the date of enactment of the revised law (July 9, 2012), do I still need to carry my alien registration certificate on my person until my special permanent resident certificate is issued?

A: After the introduction of the new residency management system, if a special permanent resident has an alien registration certificate, for a certain period that certificate will be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate. Thus, since the previous alien registration certificate will be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate, special permanent residents are not required to always have it on their person. (See Q4)

Q10: Am I required to immediately replace the alien registration certificate I currently have with a special permanent resident certificate?

A: For special permanent residents who have an alien registration certificate as of the date of enactment of the revised law (July 9, 2012), said alien registration certificate will be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate for a certain period of time.

Note that in such cases, the special permanent resident certificate number printed on one's certificate of residence shall as a general rule be the alien registration certificate number with the final digit omitted. (It will be the same as the alien registration certificate number for those under the age of 16.)

In order to avoid placing greater burden than before on special permanent residents, the period of validity in such cases shall as a general rule be until the birthday of the concerned person that serves as the start of the next confirmation (renewal) application period based on the former Alien Registration Law. However, in the case that the start of the next confirmation (renewal) application period based on the former Alien Registration Law comes within three years of the date of enactment of the revised law (that is, until July 8, 2015), the period of validity shall be three years from the date of enactment (until July 8, 2015).

Also, in addition to replacement of the alien registration certificate via notification or application as required by the Special Act on Immigration Control, a special permanent resident him/herself can voluntarily choose to replace the alien registration certificate with a special permanent resident certificate.

Note that for special permanent residents who were under the age of 16 as of July 9, 2012, the period of validity is until the date of one's 16th birthday.

Q11: When, where, and how should I apply to replace my alien registration certificate with a special permanent resident certificate?

A: From July 9, 2012 onward, in the case of special permanent residents who are age 16 or older and have an alien registration certificate for which the start of the next confirmation (renewal) application period based on the former Alien Registration Law (i.e., the birthday serving as the start of the next confirmation [replacement] application period) comes on or before July 8, 2015, the alien registration certificate shall be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate until July 8, 2015.

In the case of a special permanent resident for whom the start of the next confirmation (renewal) application period based on the former Alien Registration Law (i.e., that person's birthday serving as the start of the next confirmation [replacement] application period) comes on or after July 9, 2015, the alien registration certificate shall be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate until said start of the next confirmation (renewal) application period.

An alien registration certificate held by a special permanent resident that was under the age of 16 as of July 9, 2012 shall be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate until that person's 16th birthday.

Special permanent residents should apply for issuance of a special permanent resident certificate by submitting an application form and one photo (not required for those under the age of 16) and presenting their alien registration certificate and passport (or in the case that a passport cannot be presented, a form stating the reasons for such) at the municipality in which they reside. This should be done within the period that the alien registration certificate is regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate.

Q12: My birthday is December 1, and currently the next period for application of confirmation (renewal) for my alien registration certificate is from December 1 to December 30, 2014. By when do I have to replace it with a new special permanent resident certificate?

A: In the case of special permanent residents age 16 or older as of July 9, 2012 for whom the start of the next confirmation (renewal) application period of their alien registration certificates falls on or between the dates July 9, 2012 and July 8, 2015, said alien registration certificates must be replaced with a special permanent resident certificate no later than July 8, 2015.

Reference - The period during which one's old alien registration certificate will be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate:

1. Special permanent residents under the age of 16 as of July 9, 2012:
Until the person's 16th birthday
2. Special permanent residents age 16 or older as of July 9, 2012:
 - a. Persons for whom the start of the "next confirmation (renewal) application period" is on or before July 8, 2015:
Until July 8, 2015
 - b. Persons for whom the start of the "next confirmation (renewal) application period" is on or after July 9, 2015:
Until that person's birthday serving as the start of the next confirmation (renewal) application period

Q13: Previously, the period for applying for renewal of the alien registration certificate was within thirty days of one's birthday. Has there been a change to this application period?

A: Persons who have an alien registration certificate that is regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate must replace it with an actual special permanent resident certificate by the date shown in the "Reference" section of Q12.

Persons who have already received a special permanent resident certificate must apply for renewal by the expiration date; applications may be made starting two months prior to the expiration date.

For special permanent resident certificates that are valid until the owner's 16th birthday, applications for renewal can be made starting six months prior to said birthday.

Q14: I've heard that the alien registration certificate I have currently doesn't need to be replaced for quite some time. But in the case of someone whose alien registration certificate will be regarded as equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate until July 8, 2015, for example, will there be problems with crowding and lines at the service desk if that person applies for a replacement special permanent resident certificate in June or July of 2015?

A: Nearly half of all special permanent residents have an alien registration certificate that is regarded as equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate with a period of validity ending on July 8, 2015. Considerable crowding is expecting for the three or four months leading up to that date, so it is recommended that you apply for a replacement special permanent resident certificate as early as possible. You can, of course, apply even now.

Q15: (For cases in which a passport is necessary when carrying out the application specified in Q11) I am a special permanent resident that does not have a passport. What should I do when replacing my alien registration certificate with a special permanent resident certificate?

A: Special permanent residents who do not have a passport should submit a form stating the reason they cannot present one.

Q16: Are there any penalties or other consequences if the period that a person's alien registration certificate is regarded as equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate ends and he/she has not applied for a special permanent resident certificate?

A: Alien registration certificates held by special permanent residents are regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate for a certain period (see Q10), but if this period ends without the person applying for issuance of a special permanent resident certificate, said person may be imprisoned for up to one year or fined up to 200,000 yen.

Q17: Alien registration certificates will be regarded as being equivalent to a special permanent resident certificate for a certain period. What should I do if I want to switch over to a special permanent resident certificate before that period ends?

A: If a special permanent resident so wishes, he/she may apply for issuance of a special permanent resident certificate even now at the municipality he/she resides in. If you wish to do so, please submit the application form and one photo (not necessary for those under age 16). Please also present your alien registration certificate and passport (or in the case that a passport cannot be presented, a form stating the reasons for such).

Details shown on certificate - Answers

Q18: What kind of information will be shown on the special permanent resident certificate?

A: In addition to a photograph, the following information will be shown:

1. Full name, date of birth, sex, and nationality/region
2. Place of residence (location of main residence in Japan)
3. Special permanent resident certificate number, date of issuance, and date of expiry

Photographs will not be shown on special permanent resident certificates that have a period of validity expiring on the owner's 16th birthday.

Details on the previous alien registration certificate that have been removed include: 1) Address in country of nationality, 2) Place of birth, 3) Passport number, date of passport issuance, 4) Householder name, relationship to householder, 5) Signature

Q19: Will the way that names are represented be handled the same as with alien registration? Also, will it be possible to have an alias/nickname shown on the certificate?

A: In principle, names on special permanent resident certificates will be represented in Roman characters. However, names using kanji or both kanji and kana may be displayed (along with the name written in Roman characters, as a general rule) based on materials verifying that the name uses said kanji.

However, in cases in which the Minister of Justice acknowledges that representing a special permanent resident's name in Roman characters will cause significant detriment to said resident or that there are other special circumstances, the name may be represented in the relevant kanji or mix of kanji and kana in lieu of Roman characters.

Furthermore, it is predicted that there will be cases in which it is difficult to obtain a passport or other official certificate serving as prima-facie evidence for the use of Roman characters or kanji. Thus, in cases in which kanji or both kanji and kana are to be displayed alongside Roman characters, the former alien registration certificate may be used as prima-facie evidence.

Additionally, in cases in which a name using Roman characters cannot be confirmed, names using kanji that were registered based on the former Alien Registration Law will be continued to be used on special permanent resident certificates as much as possible, excepting cases in which simplified Chinese characters, etc. are replaced with authorized kanji.

Note that the range and usage of kanji used in names and other necessary matters relating to the representation of names using kanji are prescribed in a notice (see Note) by the Minister of Justice. Foreigner names using kanji that are acknowledged as authorized kanji will be written using those kanji, and all other simplified Chinese characters, etc. shall be replaced with authorized kanji.

Note: • Notice regarding the representation of names using kanji on residence cards, etc. (2011 Ministry of Justice Announcement No. 582)

<http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/topics/pdf/honbun.pdf>

- Regarding the representation of names using kanji on residence cards and special permanent resident certificates (Ministry of Justice Immigration Bureau homepage information bulletin board)

http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/topics/kanji_kokuji.pdf

For both legal and operational reasons, aliases/nicknames will not be shown on special permanent resident certificates.

Information that the Minister of Justice will continue to ascertain under the new residency management system and special permanent resident system is limited to that which is necessary for a fair residency management system. Taking into account such things as the fact that aliases are not information necessary for residency management and the fact that information necessary for resident administrative services is generally kept in the basic resident registration system regarding foreigners, the Ministry of Justice will not conduct management of aliases (including showing them on special permanent resident certificates, etc.).

Note that the Ministry of Justice does not have administrative jurisdiction over certificates of residence or basic resident registration cards but does understand that certificates of residence allow for aliases.

Q20: I am a special permanent resident, and on my alien registration certificate my name is displayed in kanji, but my passport displays my name in English characters only. Is it possible to have my name displayed in both kanji and English characters on my special permanent resident certificate?

A: As stated in the answer to Q19, names using kanji that were registered based on the former Alien Registration Law will be continued to be used as much as possible and displayed alongside names written in Roman characters on special permanent resident certificates. (However, simplified Chinese characters, etc., will be replaced with characters falling within the scope of authorized kanji before being printed on the special permanent resident certificate.

Q21: Is it possible to have a paper certificate of the details shown on my special permanent resident certificate issued? Can I obtain this paper certificate at a city office?

A: A certificate of residence is created for special permanent residents based on the Basic Resident Registration Act. The items shown on this certificate include one's name, date of birth, sex, address, name of householder, relation to householder, nationality etc., status as a special permanent resident, and special permanent resident certificate number. A copy of this certificate of residence showing these items can be issued at the municipality in which you live.

Procedures performed by proxy: Answers

Q22: Is it possible to have a representative accept a special permanent resident certificate in lieu of the owner? If so, what kind of person can act as a representative to accept it?

A: In the event that a special permanent resident is under 16 years of age or for some other reason is unable to provide notification of address or other such items by him/herself, then it is necessary for a family member (spouse, child, parent, etc.) 16 years of age or older who is living with said resident to carry out such notification and accept the special permanent resident certificate on his/her behalf.

Note that even in the absence of the reasons stated above, a family member 16 years of age or older living with a special permanent resident can carry out notification, etc. and accept a special permanent resident certificate in lieu of said resident if said resident so requests.

Furthermore, in cases stipulated by an ordinance of the Ministry of Justice, notification of address, etc., made by a householder or an agent designated by a special permanent resident at that resident's request will be approved of. Additionally, with regards to other notifications, etc., agents such as a lawyer or notary public who have provided notification to the Regional Immigration Bureau Director or a family member not living with the resident may accept a special permanent resident certificate on the person's behalf if approved of by the Minister of Justice.

Format: Answers

Q23: I've heard that special permanent resident certificates will contain an "IC chip." What kind of information is registered in the IC chip?

A: Some or all of the items appearing on the face of the special permanent resident certificate are registered in the IC chip. No other information will be registered in the chip. Specifically, information such as one's name, date of birth, sex, nationality / region, residence, and photo (limited only to cases in which one appears on the face of the special permanent resident certificate) will be registered.

Q24: About how big is the special permanent resident certificate?

A: The shape and dimensions of the special permanent resident certificate are the same as the previous alien registration certificate and driver's licenses.

For details, please refer to the "Overview of the residence card and special permanent resident certificate" on the homepage of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice.

(http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/newimmiact_1/pdf/zairyu_syomei_mikata.pdf)

Q25: What is the format of the special permanent resident certificate for someone under 16 years of age? Will a photo be required?

A: Special permanent resident certificates that expire on the owner's 16th birthday will not have photos on them. Thus, persons under 16 years of age do not need submit a photograph except when applying to renew the period of validity for their special permanent resident certificate. There are no other differences in format aside from the photograph.

Countermeasures against forgery: Answers

Q26: What kind of countermeasures have been taken against forgery of special permanent resident certificates?

A: Special permanent resident certificates contain an IC chip with advanced security features. Forging a fake card is extremely difficult. In addition, the face of the certificate also implements preventative measure against forgery such as holograms and optically variable ink.

For details, please refer to the "Overview of the residence card and special permanent resident Certificate" on the homepage of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice.

(http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/newimmiact_1/pdf/zairyu_syomei_mikata.pdf)

Providing notification of address: Answers

Q27: If I've moved and changed my address, what kind of procedures are necessary? Where should I do them, and by when?

A: If you've changed your residence, please provide notification your new address at the municipality of your new residence within 14 days from the date of relocation.

Note that if you submit your special permanent resident certificate and provide notification of moving in / change of address as stipulated in the Basic Resident Registration Act, you will not be required provide notification of your address again in accordance with the Special Act on Immigration Control.

Q28: I'd like to know about the relation between notification of address and notification of moving in / change of address based on the Basic Resident Registration Act. Is it possible to do such notifications in a single procedure?

A: In order to reduce the burden on foreigners, in the case that a special permanent resident submits his/her special permanent resident certificate and provides notification of moving in / change of address in accordance with the Basic Resident Registration Act, it will be deemed as being equivalent to having provided notification of address in accordance with the Special Act on Immigration Control (Article 10, Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Special Act on Immigration Control). Thus, if a special permanent resident submits his/her special permanent resident certificate (including former alien registration certificates that are regarded as equivalent to special permanent resident certificates) and provides notification of moving in / change of address in accordance with the Basic Resident Registration Act, it will be deemed that he/she has fulfilled the obligation of notification in accordance with the Special Act on Immigration Control.

Procedures for notification of moving out, however, are not stipulated in the Special Act on Immigration Control, so it is not necessary to submit one's special permanent resident certificate when providing notification of moving out in accordance with the Basic Resident Registration Act.

Note that in the case that when providing notification of moving in / change of address in accordance with the Basic Resident Registration Act you have forgotten to bring or otherwise cannot submit your special permanent resident certificate, it will not be deemed as equivalent to providing notification of address in accordance with the Special Act on Immigration Control as stated above. In such a case, it is necessary to provide notification of address again at the municipality of your residence.

Q29: Will a new special permanent resident certificate be issued when there is no longer enough space to write my address on the back of my current certificate?

A: Such cases are handled in the same manner as driver's licenses that have run out of space for changes of address - a special paper will be newly affixed to the back of your certificate at the service desk at your municipality. Simply running out of space to write a new address will not be reason enough to require procedures to obtain a new special permanent resident certificate (so you will not need to prepare a photograph or pay fees).

Notification of change of details other than address: Answers

Q30: What are the procedures for when there is a change in details other than address (such as name, date of birth, sex, or nationality / region, etc.)? Where should I do them, and by when?

A: For changes in name, date of birth, sex, or nationality / region, please provide notification at the municipality you reside in within 14 days from the relevant change. When providing notification, please submit the notification form, one photo (not required for those under 16 years of age) and materials verifying the change. Please also present your special permanent resident certificate and passport (or in the case that a passport cannot be presented, a form stating the reasons for such).

Renewal of period of validity: Answers

Q31: If I renew the period of validity of my special permanent resident certificate, how long will it be valid?

A: Special permanent resident certificates that are issued via an application for renewal of period of validity will be valid until the date of one's 7th birthday after the date of expiry of the special permanent resident certificate owned at the time of application.

Q32: What kind of procedures are necessary to renew the period of validity of my special permanent resident certificate?

A: Please apply for a renewal of period of validity for your special permanent resident certificate either in person or via an agent/representative stipulated by law (e.g., for someone under 16 years of age, a family member living with him/her) at the municipality in which you reside. For those under 16 years of age, this is to be done within a period starting six months prior to the person's 16th birthday and ending on the date of the 16th birthday. For those 16 years of age or older, this is to be done within a period starting two months prior to the date of expiry and ending on said date of expiry. When applying for a renewal, please submit the application form and one photograph (not required for those under 16 years of age). Please also present your passport (or in the case that a passport cannot be presented, a form stating the reasons for such) and your special permanent resident certificate (including former alien registration certificates regarded as equivalent to such).

When your new special permanent resident certificate is issued it will have a new period of validity, so you must once more take your current certificate and submit it to be exchanged with the newly issued one at your municipality. The old certificate will be returned to the Minister of Justice.

Nullification / return of certificates: Answers

Q33: In what situations will a special permanent resident certificate become void?

A: A special permanent resident certificate will become void in the following cases: 1) When the holder is no longer a special permanent resident, 2) When the period of validity expires, 3) When the holder leaves Japan without a re-entry permit (this includes special re-entry permits), 4) When the holder does not re-enter Japan within the period of validity for the re-entry permit (in the case of special re-entry permit, within two years from date of departure), 5) When a new special permanent resident certificate is issued for the holder, 6) If the holder is deceased.

Q34: In what situations is a special permanent resident certificate to be returned?

A: When a special permanent resident certificate becomes void (see Q33), it must be returned for a certain period according to the reason for its nullification. For example, when a new certificate is issued, the original one must be returned. In the case of nullification due to death of the holder, a family member or person who had been living with the holder must return the certificate.

Application for reissuance - Answers

Q35: What are the procedures for when a special permanent resident certificate is lost or stolen, etc.?

A: If you have lost your special permanent resident certificate due to misplacement, theft, or destruction, etc., please apply for reissuance of the certificate at the municipality you reside in within 14 days from the date you became aware of the loss. When applying, please submit the application form, one photograph (not required for those under 16 years of age) and materials verifying that you have lost possession of your special permanent resident certificate. Please also present your passport (or in the case that a passport cannot be presented, a form stating the reasons for such).

Q36: What are the procedures for when damage or dirt makes a special permanent resident certificate unusable as identification?

A: When a special permanent resident certificate is significantly damaged or dirtied (including damage to the IC chip), you can apply for reissuance of the certificate at the municipality in which you reside. When applying, please submit the application form and one photograph (not required for those under 16 years of age). Please also present your passport (or in the case that a passport cannot be presented, a form stating the reasons for such) and special permanent resident card. Note that even if your special permanent resident certificate is not damaged or stained, if you wish to exchange it for a new one, you can apply for such at the municipality in which you reside. In such cases, due to the costs involved you will be required to pay a fee (1,300 yen) as stipulated by government ordinance.

Q37: Does a special permanent resident certificate need to be reissued if its IC chip can no longer be read?

A: You can apply for reissuance of a special permanent resident certificate in cases when the IC chip is damaged. Additionally, you may be ordered to apply for reissuance of the certificate due to damage to the IC chip.

Request for disclosure of information: Answers

Q38: Now that the alien registration system has been discontinued, is it possible to request disclosure of information on the alien registration card? Where should I make requests for disclosure of information regarding alien registration that I had previously made at my municipal office?

A: The alien registration card has now become an administrative document kept at the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, so requests for disclosure of information can be made based on Article 12 of the “Act on the Protection of Personal Information Held by Administrative Organs.”

The contact for requests for disclosure is the Personal Information Protection Section of the Secretarial Division of the Secretariat of the Minister of Justice.

For details, please refer to the “Notice regarding requests for disclosure of the alien registration card after the abolishment of the Alien Registration Law” on the Ministry of Justice homepage. (http://www.moj.go.jp/hisho/bunsho/hisho02_00016.html)

Q39: Is it possible to make a request for the alien registration card of a deceased relative?

A: The following persons can request for issuance of a copy of the alien registration card of a deceased relative:

1. Relatives who were living with the deceased at the time of death
2. Spouse of the deceased at the time of death (including persons in a de facto marital relationship in which the marriage had not been registered), lineal ascendants, lineal descendants, and siblings
3. Legal representatives of persons listed in items 1 and 2 above.

Note that this request for issuance does not constitute a request for disclosure based on Article 12 of the “Act on the Protection of Personal Information Held by Administrative Organs,” so such requests must, in principle, be made via mail to the Information Disclosure Section of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice.

* For details, please see “Information regarding requests for issuance of alien registration cards of deceased foreigners” on the homepage of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice. (http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/info/120628_01.html)

Q40: Now that the Alien Registration Law has been discontinued, how can I check changes made to my name or address, etc.?

A: Persons who applied to register changes to details relating to alien registration before the abolishment of the Alien Registration Law and persons who have been issued a special permanent resident certificate and have provided notification of changes to details appearing on said certificate can confirm changes by requesting disclosure of a log regarding the concerned alien registration certificate and/or special permanent resident certificate. However, for cases in which it is necessary to check changes made before October 1, 1981 that were not entered into a computer system, it is necessary to make a request for disclosure of alien registration card. The contact for requests for disclosure is the Personal Information Protection Section of the Secretarial Division of the Secretariat of the Minister of Justice.

Revisions to the re-entry permit system: Answers

Q41: Is it possible not to carry my special permanent resident certificate and use just my passport to leave and enter Japan via the special re-entry permit?

A: Legally, the special re-entry permit is granted only to special permanent residents who are carrying a valid passport and special permanent resident certificate. Additionally, an ordinance of the Ministry of Justice stipulates that a passport and special permanent resident certificate must be presented during confirmation of departure made via special re-entry permits.

Note: When leaving Japan via special re-entry permit, please make sure to check “Departure with Special Re-entry Permission” on the “embarkation card for reentrant.”

Q42: What should I do if I misplace my special permanent resident certificate overseas after leaving Japan via special re-entry permit? Not having a special permanent resident certificate would create difficulties during entry procedures.

A: Carrying a special permanent resident certificate is not a requirement when re-entering Japan via a special re-entry permit. Thus, even if you lose your special permanent resident certificate while outside Japan, re-entry via special re-entry permit will be possible. Once you have re-entered Japan, you should promptly carry out reissuance procedures at the municipality in which you reside.

In the case that you have lost your passport or special permanent resident certificate while outside Japan and you expect it will be necessary to verify your status of residence in Japan during plane boarding procedures, etc. when returning to Japan, you can obtain proof of the re-entry permit period at the Regional Immigration Bureau with jurisdiction over your area of residence via an agent/representative.

Q43: Will I lose my status as a special permanent resident if I re-enter Japan after my special re-entry permit expires?

A: Please carefully note that the period of validity for special re-entry permits (two years from the date of departure) cannot be extended and that you will lose your status as a special permanent resident after this period has passed.

Q44: What procedures are necessary when re-entering Japan after the two-year period of validity of a special permanent resident’s special re-entry permit has passed?

A: When a special permanent resident that has left Japan via a special re-entry permit tries to enter Japan more than two years after the initial date of departure, he/she cannot enter the country as a special permanent resident. Said person must receive new landing permission, which includes obtaining a new visa in the case of a status of residence that requires a visa. Furthermore, even after entering Japan with new landing permission, the person cannot obtain status as a special permanent resident again.

Q45: I am a special permanent resident. Can I leave and enter Japan via special re-entry permit using automated gates?

A: If you have performed automated gate user registration beforehand and fulfill the requirements of the special re-entry permit, then you may leave and enter Japan via special re-entry permit using automated gates. Note that when a person who has performed automated gate user registration on or before July 8, 2012 intends to leave or enter Japan via special re-entry permit using automated gates, it is necessary for that person to change his/her registration to one that handles "special re-entry." It is not necessary to provide fingerprint information again when changing your registration.

Notice regarding kanji: Answers

Q50: Why must simplified Chinese characters in a foreigner's name be replaced with authorized kanji in the new system? Why are there some characters that were used in previous alien registration but cannot be used in the new system?

A: When kanji are to be displayed as part of a name on a residence card or special permanent resident certificate (hereinafter collectively referred to as "residence cards, etc."), simplified Chinese characters, etc. cannot be displayed as is and must be converted into characters falling within the range of authorized kanji before being displayed on residence cards, etc.

The reasoning behind this is based on the opinions of municipalities (i.e., the opinion that it is necessary to coordinate name representation methods expected to be used in future work taking place at municipalities [such as in the various systems for certificates of residence, national health insurance, the National Pension, etc.]).

Additionally, the Ministry of Justice understands that in the Basic Resident Registration Act, foreigners' names containing kanji are to be written on certificates of residence with authorized kanji, following the conventions used for residence cards, etc. Thus, due to the need to ensure compatibility with the kanji currently used in the work relating to the basic resident register (Standardized Characters for the Basic Resident Registration Network), the kanji that can be displayed on residence cards, etc. are limited to characters falling within the range of authorized kanji, while still affording as much consideration as possible to the original character forms of foreigner names.

For details on the past opinions from municipalities with regards to this matter, please refer to pages 2-4 of the "Basic stance on conversion of simplified Chinese characters, etc. into authorized kanji" below.

Reference URL:

<http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public?CLASSNAME=PCMMSTDETAIL&id=300130050&Mode=2>

Q51: What is the legal basis for the representation methods used for names with kanji (including replacement with authorized kanji) on residence cards, etc.?

A: Provisions serving as the basis for the display of names in kanji, etc. (including kanji and/or kana; the same hereafter) on residence cards, etc. are found in Article 19-7, paragraphs 1 and 4 of the "Ordinance for the Enforcement of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act," as well as Article 5, paragraphs 1 and 4 of the "Ordinance for the Enforcement of the Special Exemption Law Concerning the Immigration Control of Those Who Have Renounced Japanese Citizenship and Others under the Peace Treaty with Japan."

Additionally, a Ministry of Justice notice ("Notice regarding the representation, etc. of names in kanji on residence cards, etc." - hereinafter referred to as the "notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.") has been established based on the provisions of these ordinances.

Q52: What are considered “authorized kanji” in the “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.”? Does the range of characters differ from the kanji authorized for family register matters? And what does “simplified Chinese characters, etc.” mean?

A: “Authorized kanji” in the “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.” refers to the kanji covered by numbered items 1 through 3 below. Please note carefully that the range of characters differs from the kanji authorized for family register matters.

1. JIS Levels 1 - 4 (JIS X 0208 and JIS X 0213)
2. JIS Supplementary Kanji (kanji designated in JIS X 0212, excluding those from numbered item 1 above)
3. Kanji designated in “annexed list 1” of the “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.”

“Simplified Chinese characters, etc.” according to the “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.” are kanji that are not acknowledged as authorized kanji. Specifically, this refers to simplified Chinese characters and Taiwanese traditional characters, etc. whose character forms do not match those of the authorized kanji.

Q53: What kind of considerations have been made up to this point with regards to the representation of names in kanji (including replacement by authorized kanji)? And was the process of these considerations made public up to this point? Furthermore, were the opinions of Japanese citizens and concerned foreigners taken into account?

A: Considerations on this matter took place in December 2009 and March 2010 at the “Study group on practical affairs relating to the transition to the basic resident registration system with regards to foreign residents, etc.” organized by the Ministry of Justice (“document 2” from the 4th meeting and “document 1” from the 6th meeting). Based on the above considerations, opinions on basic policies and issues relating to the matter were gathered from a wide range of citizens and other participants at the public comment session (regarding the specifications of residence cards and special permanent resident cards) held by the Ministry of Justice on June 2010.

Additionally, opinions on the basic stance regarding replacing simplified Chinese characters, etc., with authorized kanji when representing names using kanji on residence cards, etc. were gathered from a wide range of citizens and other participants at the public comment session (regarding representation of kanji in names on residence cards and special permanent resident certificates) held by the Ministry of Justice in October 2011.

The “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.” was established and announced in December 2011 based on these considerations and opinions.

Reference URLs

- Ministry of Justice “Study group on practical affairs relating to the transition to the basic resident registration system with regards to foreign residents, etc.”

http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/kenkyu/daityo_ikou/index.html

- Regarding the specifications of residence cards and special permanent resident cards (collection of opinions)

<http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public?CLASSNAME=PCMMSTDETAIL&id=300130040&Mode=0>

- About the results of the collection of opinions regarding the specifications of residence cards and special permanent resident cards

<http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public?CLASSNAME=PCMMSTDETAIL&id=300130040&Mode=2>

- Regarding the representation of kanji in names on residence cards and special permanent resident certificates (collection of opinions)

<http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public?CLASSNAME=PCMMSTDETAIL&id=300130050&Mode=0>

- About the results of the collection of opinions regarding “Regarding the representation of kanji in names on residence cards and special permanent resident certificates”

<http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public?CLASSNAME=PCMMSTDETAIL&id=300130050&Mode=2>

Q54: What should I do if I want to find out whether the kanji in my name are considered simplified Chinese characters, etc., and what kind of authorized kanji they will be replaced by?
A: Please make use of the overview of the “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.” and for individual characters, make use of the table of corresponding kanji (table showing simplified Chinese characters, etc. and the corresponding authorized kanji). These documents are found on the information bulletin board on the homepage of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice.

Reference URL

- Regarding the representation of kanji in names on residence cards and special permanent resident certificates

(Information bulletin board on the homepage of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice)

http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/topics/kanji_kokuji.pdf

Q55: I checked the kanji in my name on the homepage of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice (see Q54), but I am dissatisfied with the authorized kanji that they will be replaced with.
A: With regards to the representation of names on residence cards, etc., the basic rule is to write names in Roman characters. If a person requests, a representation of the name in kanji, etc. can appear alongside the Roman character version.

Thus, if a person does not wish for his/her name to be displayed in kanji, etc. in the first place, as long as he/she does not make a request for such, the name will not be displayed in kanji, etc. on residence cards, etc. and only the version written with Roman characters will appear.

It is not possible for each person to choose replacement characters of their liking.

Q56: The character forms for the kanji in my name used on residence cards, etc. have changed from what was used for alien registration. What do I need to do to provide proof of the simplified Chinese characters, etc., that were used in my name on my alien registration certificate?

A: You can provide proof of names using simplified Chinese characters, etc., on your alien registration certificate with a passport or other such official document issued by a foreign

government. In the case that your alien registration certificate was returned to you when your residence card, etc., was issued, you can use said certificate as proof.

Note: In cases in which a foreigner who has an alien registration certificate is issued a new residence card, etc., the alien registration certificate is returned to its owner after having a hole punched in it. (In the case of issuance of a special permanent resident certificate at a municipality, this is limited to those who have requested such.)

For cases in which a person no longer has an alien registration certificate due to misplacement or other reasons, that person can provide proof by making a request to the Ministry of Justice for disclosure of the alien registration card that displayed the name using simplified Chinese characters, etc.

Reference URL

- Regarding the representation of names on residence cards and special permanent resident certificates

<http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/keiziban/pdf/kanjiannai.pdf>

Q57: Have you provided embassies, financial institutions, and other institutions with notification about representation of kanji in names on residence cards, etc. (including replacement with authorized kanji)?

A: With regards to the representation of kanji in names on residence cards, etc., to date, information has been publicized on the homepage of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice (see Q54 and Q56). Additionally, institutions that perform identity verification have been notified by the relevant ministries and government offices. We intend to make continued efforts for further notification in the future.

Q58: What should I do to match the name in kanji on my seal registration, etc., with the name in kanji as shown on residence card, etc.? And is it possible for me to use the original kanji for my alias (nickname) on my certificate of residence or for the seal imprint of my seal registration?

A: These issues do not fall under the administrative jurisdiction of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice. Please direct such inquiries to the municipality or agency in charge of such issues.

Q59: In the event that a residence card is issued along with landing permission for me at an airport, will my name not be written in kanji (alongside the Roman character version)?

A: At present, residence cards issued at airports and similar locations will only allow for names written in Roman characters.

Reference URL

- Regarding the specifications of residence cards and special permanent resident cards (collection of opinions) Material 1 (item 3)

<http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public?CLASSNAME=PCMMSTDETAIL&id=300130040&Mode=0>

Q60: What are the fees involved when exchanging a residence card, etc., displaying a name only in Roman characters for a new one that also has the name represented in kanji?

A: There will be no extra fees for exchange if you request your name also be represented in kanji when submitting some other notification or application. (This includes: applications relating to permission to stay, such as applying for renewal of period of stay; notification of change of details other than address; application for renewal of period of validity of residence card, etc.; and application for reissuance due to loss, etc.)

However, in the case that you wish to exchange your residence card, etc., for a new one and there is no significant staining or damage to the card, when requesting that your name to be displayed anew in kanji alongside the Roman character version, you will be responsible for an exchange fee of 1,300 yen.

Q61: (Regarding corresponding character forms)

I was told that the kanji in my name could be displayed with the same character on my residence card, etc. However, the character to be used has a different meaning in China, so I would like it to be replaced with a different authorized character in keeping with Chinese rules. For example, “芸,” “沈,” and “叶” are authorized Japanese characters. On the other hand, in China, these are simplified characters, with the corresponding traditional characters being “藝,” “瀋,” and “葉”. Thus instead of displaying “芸,” “沈,” and “叶” on my residence card, etc., in accordance with Japanese rules (official standards regarding kanji such as JIS X0213), I would like the characters to be replaced with “藝,” “瀋,” and “葉” in keeping with Chinese rules.

A: The kanji in question (“芸,” “沈,” and “叶,” etc.) are all kanji based on Japanese kanji standards - Japanese Industrial Standards - JIS X0213 or JIS X0212. That is to say, they are “authorized kanji” as designated in the “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.” The Immigration Bureau understands that they are also kanji used in the current certificates of residence.

In cases such as these, rather than following foreign kanji specifications (the General List of Simplified Chinese Characters [簡化字総表], etc.), kanji will be displayed as-is on residence cards, etc. in keeping with Japanese kanji specifications (Japanese Industrial Standards) (see Note).

Note that national and regional public bodies are obligated to respect Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS) in accordance with Article 67 of the Industrial Standardization Act.

Note: In JIS X0213, kanji such as “芸,” “沈,” and “叶” which have the same form but are differing characters (kanji that have different origins but are currently considered to have little distinction as a shape concept) are defined as being treated as the same kanji with no distinction between the variants (JIS X0213 4.w). The “notice regarding kanji on residence cards, etc.” conforms to this definition.

Q62: (Regarding corresponding characters forms)

The character style appearing on my passport and on my residence card, etc., is slightly different. Is it not possible to match kanji on my residence card, etc. with the character style on my passport? For example, “__” (on a passport) changed to “鄭” (on a residence card, etc.)

A: In some cases, the printed character style of a kanji can differ per country. Printing on residence cards, etc., employs Japan’s standard character style as established in JIS X0213, etc.

Q63: (Regarding replacement of variant characters / similar kanji)

With the table of corresponding kanji (for replacement by authorized kanji) already established, replacing a character with an authorized kanji different from what the table shows isn’t allowed. But would it be impossible in some exceptional cases for a foreigner to choose a different replacement character from the list of possible authorized kanji?

A: The Immigration Bureau is of the stance that enabling individual foreigners to choose kanji from the list of possible authorized kanji would not be appropriate from a standpoint of ensuring the accuracy of names displayed on residence cards, etc.

Q64: (Regarding replacement of variant characters)

I understand the reasoning for replacing simplified Chinese characters, etc., with authorized kanji (variant characters), but what materials was the table of corresponding kanji based upon?

A: The variant character relationship of simplified Chinese characters, etc., and authorized kanji was confirmed in the following materials:

1. General List of Simplified Chinese Characters (簡化字總表)
2. 1st Batch of Tabulated Variant Forms of Chinese Characters (第一批異体字整理表)
3. IPSJ-TS 0008:2007 (Structure of variant characters of the large-scale kanji compilation [Information Processing Society of Japan trial standard])
4. Unicode Unihan Database
5. The Kangxi dictionary and other character dictionaries helpful in confirming the relationship between simplified Chinese characters, etc. and authorized kanji (variant characters)