



Japan 2019 Crime & Safety Report: Nagoya



This is an annual report produced in conjunction with the Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, Japan.

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses Japan at Level 1, indicating travelers should exercise normal precautions.

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Crime Threats

There is minimal risk from crime in Nagoya. Nagoya's general crime rate is below the U.S. national average. The Sakae and the Naka-ku neighborhoods, south of Nagoya station, are entertainment districts with slightly higher risk. U.S. citizens have been the victims of physical/sexual assaults; drink spiking; drug overdoses; and thefts of purses, wallets, cash, and credit cards at bars or clubs. Non-violent crimes, especially financial crimes that include the use of stolen credit cards and credit card numbers, occur on a regular basis.

Violent crime is rare. A very small number of homicides occur in/around Nagoya every year, but there have been no reports of U.S. victims.

Crimes against U.S. citizens usually involve personal disputes, theft, or vandalism. Pickpocketing and other petty crimes take place in crowded shopping areas, bars/nightclubs, train stations, and airports. Every year, a small number of U.S. citizens report their passports lost or stolen at Chubu International Airport.

Police registered 2,736 burglaries occurred in Aichi Prefecture in 2018, a 25.6% decrease from 2017. Despite the overall drop, the Aichi has had the highest burglary rate in Japan for 12 years in a row. Of note, small groups of criminals target unoccupied single-family homes. These groups are only in search of cash, and ignore other valuables inside the home. To avoid becoming a victim of this type of crime, program one or more interior lights to turn on automatically just before dusk, and install motion sensor lights to the home's exterior.

There were 839 incidents of automobile theft in Aichi during 2018, also down 25% from 2017. Toyota Prius, Toyota Land Cruiser, and Lexus RX models top the list of most stolen vehicles. Central and Eastern Nagoya (Toyota City) registered the highest number of car thefts.

Aichi authorities registered 136 robbery cases in 2018, a 31.7% decrease from 2017. According to police, most criminals use motorcycles to snatch victims' bags as they ride by, with 75% victims being pedestrians and 25% being people on other bikes. Most incidents occur around Nagoya station and target young female victims once they turn onto smaller side streets. Although 136 is a very low annual number, pedestrians in and around shopping areas, bars and nightclub areas, train stations, and airports should still exercise common sense by being aware of their surroundings.

Bicycle theft is by far the most common crime. Police registered 10,578 cases of bike theft in 2018 – nearly 30 per day – a figure that is 9.1% less than in 2017. As in other major cities, bike thefts are common throughout Nagoya, with 50% occurring in public parking areas, and roughly 20% occurring outside of victims' homes. When possible, bring your bike inside at the end of the day.

Cybersecurity Issues

Cybercrime is an emerging problem in Japan; take common sense measures to avoid becoming a victim. Take measures to protect personal information. Avoid connecting to public networks at internet cafés, hotel business centers, or Wi-Fi hotspots to conduct business anywhere in the world. The best workaround is to connect to a Virtual Private Network (VPN), most importantly when accessing financial or other sensitive information.

Other Areas of Concern

In the aftermath of the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake, the Fukushima Nuclear Reactor experienced a core meltdown, releasing radioactive material. Since then, the Government of Japan has restricted public access to areas surrounding the plant. For more details, reference Fukushima Prefecture's website.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

While roadways are generally in good condition, visitors often find driving to be complicated and expensive. Traffic moves on the left side. Roads in Japan are much narrower than they are in the U.S. Vehicle accidents, including those involving pedestrians, are common. Visitors who cannot read Japanese may have trouble understanding road signs. City traffic is often congested. There is virtually no legal roadside or curbside parking. Illegally parked vehicles commonly block or partially block traffic.

Traffic enforcement includes the extensive use of cameras. Turning on red is generally impermissible. All passengers must use seat belts.

Japan has a national zero-percent blood-alcohol content (BAC) standard for driving. Drivers found to be driving under the influence of intoxicants will have their licenses confiscated; if found guilty of "drunken, speeding, or blatantly careless driving resulting in injury," individuals are subject to up to 15 years in prison.

Japanese law provides that all drivers are liable in the event of an accident and assesses fault on all parties. Japanese Compulsory Insurance is mandatory for all automobile owners and drivers. Short-term visitors who drive must have an International Driving Permit (IDP) issued in the U.S. by either the American Automobile Association (AAA) or the American Automobile Touring Alliance (AATA). Travelers must obtain an IDP issued in their country of residence prior to arrival. U.S. diplomatic facilities do not issue IDPs. IDPs issued via the Internet and/or by other organizations are not valid. Residents in Japan are required to obtain a valid Japanese license. Residents who do not use an IDP may face fines or arrest. Most short-term visitors choose not to drive.

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Public Transportation Conditions

Japan's public transportation system is safe and efficient. The country's railway system is extensive and among the best in the world. It is a major means of public transit, especially mass and high-speed travel between cities and commuter transport within metropolitan areas. Trains are noteworthy for their safety, cleanliness, and punctuality. Although generally safe, incidents of sexual assault (groping) on crowded trains have received considerable levels of public attention of late. The exact extent of this problem is hard to assess, as many incidents likely go unreported. In response, a number of railway companies offer female-only cars, especially during rush hours.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Chubu Centrair International Airport (NGO), 35km south of the city, has limited trans-Pacific service to the U.S. and Europe, but relatively robust regional service to East and Southeast Asia.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the government of Japan's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as compliant with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation standards for oversight of Japan's air carrier operations.

Terrorism Threat

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

There is minimal risk from terrorism in Nagoya. There are no known indigenous terrorist organizations. Japan is not a known base of support/sympathy for terrorists. In recent years, there have been a modest but rising number of ISIS-related sympathizers among Japanese nationals. Media has reported on Japanese nationals who traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to join ISIS.

Japanese law enforcement is concerned about and engaged in monitoring the potential threat of lone-wolf actors.

Japan will host the 2019 Rugby World Cup, 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games, and 2025 World Expo. Japan-related threat information may increase as these events approach.

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

The vast majority of Japanese nationals regard U.S. citizens and other Westerners in a positive light. The topic of U.S. military bases in Japan – especially in Okinawa – continues to be sensitive. While some in Japan object to certain aspects of the U.S.-Japan alliance, rarely do those feelings result in hostility to U.S. citizens.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Civil Unrest

There is minimal risk from civil unrest in Nagoya. Demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience are generally limited and peaceful. Most demonstrations number in size from a few protesters to several thousand. Demonstrators must apply for a permit from the Prefectural Government prior to any protest activity. The police closely monitor these demonstrations.

The U.S. Consulate in Nagoya is occasionally the target of peaceful demonstrations, usually protesting the U.S. military presence on Japanese soil.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Japan is located in an active seismic region, known as the “Ring of Fire,” making it prone to earthquakes and, potentially, tsunamis. Japan experiences frequent earthquakes of varying intensities. Coastal cities remain susceptible to tsunamis, which stem from earthquake epicenters in the ocean and can arrive on shore within minutes. These tidal waves can cause destruction of property and lead to loss of life. In 2011, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake off the northeast coast of Japan caused a tsunami that killed over 15,000 people.

Typhoons are another threat, most commonly occurring in August and September. For more information, see the [Japan Meteorological Service’s Typhoon](#) tracker and the [Joint Typhoon Warning Center](#).

Everyone living in or visiting Japan should have a personal emergency plan for natural disasters. These plans should include contingencies for communications and evacuation.

Critical Infrastructure

The government of Japan continues to monitor the conditions at/around the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

Economic Concerns

Economic espionage/intellectual property theft is a concern. Take prudent steps to safeguard computer systems, networks, and personal electronics.

Privacy Concerns:

Japan has very strict privacy laws that govern the release of personal information.

Personal Identity Concerns

Hate-related crimes rarely occur, though some U.S. citizens have reported being the target of discrimination based on their nationality or race.

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There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations or the organization of LGBTI events in Japan. While in recent years, open members of Japan's LGBTI community have made social strides including winning elections to public office, LGBTI activists warn that Japan remains an unwelcoming place for sexual minorities. Crimes based on sexual orientation are exceptionally rare, although same-sex couples may experience harassment for outward displays of affection. Laws governing rape, sexual commerce, and other activity involving sexual relations do not apply to same-sex sexual activity. This definition leads to lower penalties for perpetrators of male rape and greater legal ambiguity surrounding same-sex prostitution.

Although Japan's accessibility laws mandate that new construction projects for public use include provisions for persons with disabilities, older buildings are likely not retrofit for accessibility. At major train stations, airports, and hotels, travelers with disabilities should encounter few accessibility problems. Note that many smaller stations are inaccessible to those who cannot climb stairs.

Drug Crime

The vast majority of arrests of U.S. citizens in Japan are for drug-related offenses. Arrestees often spend months or years in detention. Japanese authorities aggressively pursue drug smugglers and users, including recreational users with sophisticated detection equipment, "sniffing" dogs, blood tests, "stop and frisk" tactics, and other methods. Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking a drug that is illegal in Japan are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and fines.

Some drugs that may be legal in certain jurisdictions outside of Japan, including marijuana and synthetic drugs remain illegal in Japan. This also applies to certain prescription drugs that doctors in the United States may prescribe. Having a prescription for medical marijuana does not exempt you from Japanese law, which makes no distinction between medical and recreational marijuana. Even possession of a small amount for personal use can result in a long jail sentence and fine. Japanese customs officials carefully screen incoming packages, and individuals who receive drugs in the mail face arrest and prosecution as drug traffickers.

Japanese law allows travelers to bring up to one month's supply of allowable prescription medicine into Japan. Travelers must bring a copy of a doctor's prescription, as well as a letter stating the purpose of the drug. Those who must carry more than one month's supply (except prohibited drugs and controlled drugs), or are carrying syringes (pumps) or a CPAP machine, must obtain an import certificate (*Yakkan Shoumei*) in advance, and show it with the prescription medicines to a Japanese Customs official. For more information about bringing medicines into Japan and how to obtain a *Yakkan Shoumei*, visit [the website of the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare](#).

Find other helpful information on importing medication on the U.S. Embassy [website](#).

Kidnapping Threat

The crime of kidnapping is practically unheard of in Nagoya as well as throughout Japan.

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Police Response

Japan has strict laws regarding the use and possession of dangerous weapons. Firearms are illegal without a proper license. Carrying a pocketknife (including Swiss Army-style knife), craft or hunting knife, or box cutter in public is illegal. Violators are subject to arrest and incarceration.

Japanese police officers receive excellent training and reliably provide assistance. Police substations, called *kobans*, are located throughout cities in Japan and are generally maintain a staff of one or more officers on a 24/7 basis. The majority of Japanese police officers have a very limited ability to communicate in English; there may be a delay before they can dispatch an English-speaking officer. The quality of interpreting between Japanese and English can vary; this has caused problems for some U.S. citizen victims.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

U.S. Embassy Tokyo's American Citizen Services (ACS) section assists U.S. citizens throughout Japan. The ACS telephone number, 03-3224-5000, is staffed 24/7. The U.S. Embassy is located at 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-Ku, Tokyo. Contact the U.S. Consulate in Nagoya during business hours at (052) 581-4501.

Crime Victim Assistance

The nationwide police emergency number is **110**. Police response is generally dependable; however, English-speaking emergency dispatchers are not always immediately available.

Some U.S. citizens have reported that police procedures can appear to be less sensitive and responsive to victims' concerns when compared to those of the U.S., particularly in cases of domestic violence and sexual assault. Investigations of sexual assault sometimes proceed without the presence of female officers; officers may ask about the victim's sexual history and previous relationships. Few victim's assistance resource centers/battered women's shelters exist in major urban centers; they are generally unavailable in rural areas.

Police/Security Agencies

Prefectural police departments, under the oversight of the National Police Agency (NPA), provide policing services in Japan. Prefectural police departments subdivide into police stations/districts that further divide into substations, or *kobans*. Police patrols are a combination of foot, bicycle, and motorized units. In cities, seeking out the nearest *koban* is generally a quick way of obtaining police assistance.

Medical Emergencies

The nationwide emergency number for fire and ambulance service is **119**. This number may not work from all cell phones. English-speaking dispatchers may not be available.

Some medications available in the U.S. are illegal in Japan. Pseudoephedrine is illegal in Japan. Prescription medications containing amphetamine or other stimulants including Adderall and Ritalin are also illegal. For more information, refer to the Drug Crimes section of this report and read OSAC's report, [Traveling with Medications](#).

Contact Information for Available Medical Services

Consult the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo's ACS [webpage](#) for information on English-speaking medical facilities.

Available Air Ambulance Services

There are many air ambulance services available.

Insurance Guidance

Verify that your health insurance provides coverage overseas. Medical caregivers often require full payment at the time of treatment or proof of the ability to pay before treating a foreign national who is not a member of the Japanese National Health Insurance system.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

The CDC offers additional information on vaccines and health guidance for [Japan](#).

OSAC Country Council Information

There is not an active OSAC Country Council in Nagoya. The OSAC Tokyo Country Council is active and meets on a monthly basis. Contact OSAC's [Asia Pacific team](#) if you are interested in private-sector engagement in Tokyo, or have questions about OSAC's Country Council program.

U.S. Embassy/Consulate Location and Contact Information

Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

Nagoya International Center Bldg. 6F; 1-47-1 Nagono, Nakamura-ku, Nagoya 450-0001
General Business Hours: 0830-1730, Monday-Friday. Closed on U.S. and Japanese holidays.

Consulate Contact Numbers

Switchboard: (052)581-4501

Website: <https://jp.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/nagoya>

Nearby Posts: [Embassy Tokyo](#), [Consulate Fukuoka](#), [Consulate General Naha](#), [Consulate General Osaka-Kobe](#), [Consulate General Sapporo](#)

Additional Resource: [Japan](#) Country Information Sheet