



**2024**

# **Immigration Control and Residency Management**

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**Immigration Services Agency of Japan**



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# Introduction

## Publication of the 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management

In a global situation that changes from day to day, the Ministry of Justice's (MOJ) Immigration Services Agency (ISA) is promoting sound international exchange with Japan and helping to maintain the law and order of Japanese society. To this end, we need to apply both state-of-the-art technology and the human eye to ensure compatibility between smooth entry examinations and strict immigration control at an advanced level. In addition, we are also responsible for protecting the safety and interests of the public through the deportation of foreign nationals, who threaten Japan's safety and security, in accordance with the laws and regulations. Furthermore, the ISA has a major role to play in developing refugee recognition procedures and swiftly and reliably protecting those who seek asylum. In addition, since the MOJ is now in charge of planning, drafting and general coordination relating to improving the environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals (Cabinet decision of July 24, 2018), along with efforts aimed at promoting the smooth and proper acceptance of foreign human resources, the Ministry is also responsible for promoting the development of an environment aimed at realizing a harmonious society of coexistence with foreign nationals.

First published in 1959 under the title Immigration Control, the name of this document was changed to Immigration Control and Residency Management in 2019 and has now reached its 30th edition.

This 2024 edition of Immigration Control and Residency Management gives an overview of the ISA's work, summarizing the situation and measures surrounding recent immigration control and residency management administration, with a focus on trends in FY 2023. This includes explaining the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees enacted in the 213th ordinary Diet session on June 14, 2024, acceptance of digital nomads, addition of including fields of Specified Skilled Worker, enforcement of the Amendment Act of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act that provides for measures to solve the issues of deportation evasion and establishes the system for recognizing eligibility for complementary protection, efforts to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, and promotion of appropriate protection for refugees. It also covers some measures implemented in 2024. Finally, we hope that through this 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management immigration control and residency management administration will prove to be beneficial and easy to understand.

December 2024



Commissioner of the Immigration Services Agency of Japan



# Points of the 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management

## Organization of the 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management

- The 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management consists of three parts: Immigration Control in Recent Years (Part I), Major Policies Related to Immigration Control Administration (Part II), and Data Section.
- Part I describes the immigration control and residency management operations in recent years based on the statistics over the five-year period from 2019 to 2023.
- Part II describes the major immigration control and residency management policies (implemented during FY 2023 as well as some of the measures for FY 2024).
- Data Section describes a summary of the operations, etc. of the Immigration Services Agency (ISA).

## Part I

### Immigration Control and Residency Management in Recent Years

#### • Number of Foreign Nationals Entering Japan

In 2023, the number of foreign nationals entering Japan (including those who re-entered Japan) was 25,830,810, an increase of 21,632,765 (515.3%) compared to the previous year, and the number of foreign nationals who newly entered Japan, excluding those who re-entered, was 23,751,693, an increase of 20,328,162 (593.8%) compared to the previous year.

#### • Number of Foreign Resident

- The number of foreign residents combining the number of mid to long-term residents with the number of special permanent residents was 3,410,992 as of the end of 2023.
- In addition, the percentage of foreign residents to the total population of Japan was 2.74%, an increase of 0.28 points compared to the number at the end of the previous year.

#### • Technical Intern Training Program and Specified Skilled Worker System

- As of the end of 2023, the number of mid to long-term residents with the status of residence of “Technical Intern Training (i)” was 171,265, an increase of 6,272 (3.8%) compared to the end of the previous year.
- As of the end of 2023, the number of mid to long-term residents with the status of residence of “Technical Intern Training (ii)” was 165,529, an increase of 81,143 (96.2%) compared to the end of the previous year.
- As of the end of 2023, the number of mid to long-term residents with the status of residence of “Technical Intern Training (iii)” was 67,762, a decrease of 7,799 (10.3%) compared to the end of the previous year.
- As of the end of 2023, the number of mid to long-term residents with the status of residence of “Specified Skilled Worker (i)” was 208,425, an increase of 77,510 (59.2%) compared to the end of the previous year.
- As of the end of 2023, the number of mid- to long-term residents with the “Specified Skilled

Worker (ii)" status of residence was 37, an increase of 29 (362.5%) compared to the end of the previous year. The number has shown the largest increase since the status was newly established on April 1, 2019.

- **Number of Foreign Nationals Overstaying Their Authorized Period of Stay**

As of January 1, 2024, the number of foreign nationals overstaying their authorized period of stay was 79,113, an increase of 8,622 (12.2%) compared to 70,491 as of January 1 of the previous year.

- **Status of Refugee Recognition Operations**

- In 2023, the number of applicants for refugee status in Japan was 13,823, an increase of 10,051 (about 266%) compared to 2022.
- In 2023, the number of applicants whose application for refugee status was processed was 8,184, an increase of 947 (13.1%) compared to 2022. Of these applicants, 289 were recognized as refugees, 5,045 were not recognized as refugees (including 2 who were not recognized as refugees but recognized as eligible for persons under complementary protection), and 2,850 withdrew their applications or took other action.

## Part II

### **Major Policies Related to Immigration Control and Residency Management Administration**

- **Amendment Act of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, etc.**

At the 213<sup>th</sup> session of the Diet on June 14, 2024, the Amendment Act of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (Act No. 59 of 2024) and the Amendment Act of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees (Act No. 60 of 2024) were passed. These Act were promulgated on 21st of the same month.

- **The Amendment Act of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act**

Based on the supplementary provisions of the Amendment Act of the Immigration Control Act enacted in 2018, which stated, "Consideration shall be given to the use of numbers and other identifiers that can distinguish specific individuals in residence management systems concerning foreign nationals residing in Japan, and necessary measures shall be taken if deemed necessary," discussions have since been underway regarding the integration of residence cards and special permanent resident certificates with individual number cards. The "Priority Policy Program for Realizing Digital Society", decided by Cabinet in June 2023, stated that, with respect to the integration of individual number cards and residence cards, the necessary relevant bill will be promptly submitted to the Diet in the future to realize the integration. Furthermore, on March 15, 2024, the Amendment Bill of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, etc. was decided by Cabinet.

- **The Amendment Act of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees**

For the purpose of reviewing the status of enforcement the Technical Intern Training Program and the Specified Skilled Worker System and exploring the measures for properly accepting foreign human resources, the Advisory Panel of Experts on Ideal Form of the Technical Intern Training Program and Specified Skilled Worker System, established under the Ministerial Council on Acceptance and Inclusion of Foreign Human Resources, repeatedly discussed the ideal form of the program and system from December 2022, and submitted the final report to the Ministerial Council on November 30, 2023.

On February 9, 2024, the Ministerial Council made a decision about the actions to be taken by the government based on the final report. On March 15 of the same year, Cabinet approved the Amendment Bill for the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees.

This bill was partially modified in its supplementary provisions by the Committee on Judicial Affairs of the House of Representatives.

### ● Acceptance of Digital Nomads

To attract international remote workers, called “digital nomads,” a new system was established in March 2024. Specifically, the system allows an individual applicant to be engaged in remote work in Japan based on contracts with foreign companies, etc. for a maximum of six months under the conditions that the applicant is a national or citizen of a country or region which are under the scope of the visa exemption arrangements (Temporary Visitor) and also subjected to Japan's Tax Conventions, and that the applicant's annual income is at least ten million yen, etc.

### ● Review of the Fields of Specified Skilled Worker

- Based on requests from the competent ministries and agencies for addition to the industrial fields for Specified Skilled Worker on the grounds that it was difficult to secure human resources, related ministries and agencies reviewed the possibility of addition. As a result, the government's basic policy was partially amended to add the following four new fields: “Automobile transportation business,” “Railway,” “Forestry,” and “Wood industry” (Cabinet decision of March 29, 2024).
- In addition, it was decided that new jobs would be added to the following three existing fields: “industrial product manufacturing (renamed from “Machine parts and tooling/Industrial machinery/Electric, electronics and information industries”),” “Shipbuilding and ship machinery industry,” and “Manufacture of food and beverages” (Cabinet decision of March 29, 2024).

### ● Efforts to Realize a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

- The meeting of the Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals held on June 21, 2024 approved the Roadmap for the Realization of a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (FY 2024 partly changed) (the “Roadmap”) and the Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (FY 2024 revised) (the “Comprehensive Measures”).
- The Roadmap shows three visions for a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, medium- to long-term issues to be addressed to realize these visions (four key points), and specific measures.
- The Comprehensive Measures indicate the direction to be aimed for in relation to the ac-

ceptance and harmonious coexistence of foreign nationals in order to achieve the purpose of contributing to the realization of a society where Japanese nationals and foreign nationals are able to live safely and comfortably together through the proper acceptance of foreign nationals and to realize a society of harmonious coexistence.

- The Comprehensive Measures indicate the measures that should be implemented in a single fiscal year in the Roadmap and the measures that are not included in the Roadmap itself because they are not necessarily measures that should be implemented over the medium-to long-term, but should be addressed by the government to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.
- For the purpose of considering the content of the training, etc., to train professionals who can lead foreign nationals facing problems in their lives to an appropriate source of assistance (hereinafter referred to as “Support Coordinator for Foreign Nationals”) and discussing matters including the details of training necessary for developing such human resources, the Committee on Approaches to the Training of Support Coordinator for Foreign Nationals and the Committee on the Formulation of a Curriculum for Training Support Coordinator for Foreign Nationals, which comprised experts and others, were held in 2023, and the results of the consideration were summarized in reports in March 2024 reports.

In FY 2024, based on these reports, the ISA implements training programs for Support Coordinator for Foreign Nationals in August. Also, the ISA continues discussing matters such as the approaches for a certification system for highly-skilled support professionals.

- To foster awareness and promote understanding toward realizing a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, it was decided to designate January of each year from 2024 as “LIFE IN HARMONY PROMOTION MONTH” and carry out various awareness-raising activities.

## ● Initiatives to Resolve the Deportation Evasion Issue

On June 10, 2024, the Act for Partial Amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Special Act on the Immigration Control of, Inter Alia, Those Who Have Lost Japanese Nationality Pursuant to the Treaty of Peace with Japan (Act No. 56 of 2023) came into force.

The Amendment Act intends to resolve the issues of deportation evasion and long-term detention, and to provide secure protection for individuals who need it. Therefore, it provides a system for exceptional provisions on the effect of suspension on deportation, removal order with penalty, as an alternative to detention, a sponsorship that enables deportation procedures to be advanced without detention, recognizing eligibility for persons under complementary protection to securely protect people who need it, such as displaced persons from conflict similar to Convention refugees (enforcement on December 1, 2023), and application for special permission to stay in Japan. The Amendment Act comprehensively resolves the issues under the current Act and prepares the foundation for bringing about a society of harmonious coexistence where Japanese and foreign nationals trust and respect each other.

## ● Creation of Sponsorship

The Sponsorship is a system to change the former system based on the premise that all those who are subject to deportation procedures are also subject to detention, and to enable the progress of deportation procedures for them without detention but under the support of a Sponsor. Whether to detain them or to refer them to a Sponsorship will be determined on a



case-by-case basis, taking into account disadvantages they may suffer due to detention, in addition to flight or other risks. Even once they are detained, the requirement for detention will be reconsidered as needed every three months to avoid unnecessary detention.

### ● Promotion of Appropriate and Prompt Protection of Refugees, etc

- From the perspective that persons such as displaced persons from conflict whose stays had been permitted on compassionate grounds in the past should be protected in the same manner as refugees under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the system for recognizing eligibility for complementary protection was created on December 1, 2023. On the other hand, the need to further optimize the operation of the refugee recognition system in Japan on a continuous basis remains.
- The ISA is protecting and providing support for individuals such as displaced persons from conflict as persons under complementary protection, as well as reconsidering and working on the operation of the system as necessary, and training Refugee Inquirers to improve their capability, in a timely and appropriate manner.
- “Persons under complementary protection” means those who are not refugees under the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees but who meet all requirements for refugee status except the requirement of “fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.”
- It is planned that persons under complementary protection is provided with, in the same manner as for refugees, the “Settlement Support Program” under which they may take Japanese language lessons for a 572 period (45 minutes per period) and lifestyle guidance for a 120 period (same as above), as well as other support for independence in Japan (decided by the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues on December 1, 2023). The first Settlement Support Program started on April 15, 2024.
- Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the entire government of Japan has worked together to smoothly accept evacuees from Ukraine and provide life and other support. In the future, it will appropriately operate the system for recognizing eligibility for complementary protection to securely, promptly, and stably protect displaced persons from conflict like evacuees from Ukraine and other similar individuals who truly need protection, and ensure that people eligible for complementary protection can receive appropriate support.

### ● Responses to International Society and International Situations

- The ISA held working-level meetings with immigration control and residency management authorities from the Republic of Korea and Australia and participated in meetings organized by the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association to share information and exchange opinions.
- The 3rd Tokyo Immigration Forum, organized by the ISA, took place from December 20 to 22, 2023, with the participation of representatives from immigration control and residency management authorities of 17 countries and regions. At the meeting, participants shared information and frankly and actively exchanged opinions on various issues faced by, and actions taken by, the immigration control and residency management authorities that are required to ensure both “strict and appropriate immigration control and residency management” and “respect for fundamental human rights of foreign nationals” under the recognition that the protection of human rights, which is a universal value, is the basis of peace and stability of the international community. Participants agreed to hold the next forum in Tokyo in FY 2024.

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# 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management Report

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**Introduction** — Publication of the 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management Points of the 2024 Immigration Control and Residency Management  
**Abbreviations**

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## Abbreviations

Refugee Convention	Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
Protocol	Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees
Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement	Agreement under Article VI of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America, Regarding Facilities and Areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Japan
Immigration Control Act	Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act
Enforcement Order for the Immigration Control Act	Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act Enforcement Order
Regulation for Enforcement of the Immigration Control Act	Regulation for Enforcement of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act
Ministerial Ordinance on Criteria	Ministerial Order to Provide for Criteria Pursuant to Article 7, Paragraph (1), Item (ii) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act
Special Act on Immigration Control	Special Act on the Immigration Control of, inter alia, those who have lost Japanese Nationality pursuant to the Treaty of Peace with Japan
Enforcement Order of the Special Act on Immigration Control	Order for Enforcement of the Special Act on the Immigration Control of, inter alia, those who have lost Japanese Nationality pursuant to the Treaty of Peace with Japan
Regulation for Enforcement of the Special Act on Immigration Control	Regulation for Enforcement of the Special Act on the Immigration Control of, inter alia, those who have lost Japanese Nationality pursuant to the Treaty of Peace with Japan
Technical Intern Training Act	Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees
Regulation for Enforcement of the Technical Intern Training Act	Regulation for Enforcement of the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees
API	Advance Passenger Information
APIS	Advance Passenger Inspection System * The Advance Passenger Information System was renamed the Advance Passenger Inspection System in June 2021.
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
IOM	International Organization for Migration
PNR	Passenger Name Record
RHQ	Refugee Assistance HeadQuarters
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees