

When working in Japan as a foreign worker, you may have worries such as:

“I don’t understand my contract,” “I’m worried about my pay or working conditions,” or “Is it okay to keep working like this?” “Because of language and system differences, many people try to deal with these problems alone. This guide is based on common questions from foreign workers. It explains basic rules about work and daily life, and what you can do if you have problems. We hope this will help you feel safe and confident while working in Japan.

Understand Your Contract, Visa Status, and Working Conditions to Avoid Problems.

Q1

My employer told me my contract will not be renewed. What should I do?

A1

First, check your contract for the contract period and the conditions for renewal.

Then, it is important to ask your employer for the reason why your contract will not be renewed and how long you can continue working. If this situation may affect your daily life, you should start looking for a new job as soon as possible. It is also advisable to use Hello Work and gather information on how this may affect your visa status.

Q2

What happens to my visa status if I leave my job?

A2

Leaving your job does not mean that you immediately lose your visa status. However, if you remain unemployed for a long period, it may become a problem. After leaving your job, it is important to look for a new job as soon as possible. If necessary, you should consult Hello Work or the Immigration Services Agency of Japan. In some cases, you may need to change your visa status, so taking early action is important.

Q3

My salary is lower than expected, or different from what was promised.

A3

First, please check your employment contract, the written notice of working conditions, and pay statement. Make sure to identify what is different from what was promised. Then, ask your employer for an explanation. It is also helpful to keep records of your communication and any evidence, such as notes or photos. If the situation does not improve, you may consider consulting the Labor Standards Inspection Office.

Q4

Can I refuse to work overtime?

A4

Overtime work depends on your contract and your company’s rules. However, excessively long working hours or forced overtime may cause problems. If overtime is difficult for you, explain your reasons and discuss the situation with your employer. If the situation does not improve, keep records of your working hours and any communication. Do not continue under unreasonable conditions. Take care of your health and daily life.

Q5

I am experiencing bullying or discrimination at my workplace.

A5

First, please keep a record of what happened, including when, where, who was involved, and what was done. Then, it is important to report the situation to your supervisor or the consultation desk at your workplace. If it is difficult to resolve the issue internally, you may consider seeking help from external support organizations. Do not deal with this problem alone. Take action as early as possible.

Q6

I have trouble at work because I do not understand Japanese well.

A6

Working without understanding can lead to mistakes or problems. Please ask for clarification without hesitation. You can say, "Could you please explain it again?" Using notes or photos can also help your understanding. You can also use translation apps or ask your workplace to explain things in simple Japanese.

Q7

I want to leave my job. What should I do?

A7

First, check your company's work rules and your contract for the procedures for resignation. Then, inform your employer of your intention to leave and follow the necessary steps. In general, you need to give notice a certain period in advance. Leaving your job without notice may cause problems, so follow the proper procedures.

Q8

Can I take paid annual leave?

A8

Workers who have been employed continuously for a certain period have the right to take paid leave. This applies equally to foreign workers and Japanese workers. Please check your length of employment and remaining leave days, and submit your request to your employer in advance. Unfair treatment for taking paid leave is generally not allowed.

Q9

Will my employer be informed if I seek advice?

A9

Many consultation services handle cases with respect for the privacy of the person seeking advice. In general, the details are not shared with the employer without the person's consent. Some services allow anonymous consultation, so you can check this in advance if you are concerned.

Seek advice early rather than worrying alone, as this can help resolve problems.

If something concerns you, do not ignore it. Check the information and consult a reliable service.