

Driver's license categories in Japan

Types of license (category)	Types of vehicle that can be operated	Validity period	Eligibility for examination
Large motor vehicle license	• Large motor vehicles • Mid-sized motor vehicles • Semi-mid-sized motor vehicles • Standard motor vehicles • Special small motor vehicles • Motorized bicycles	• If bearer has been a licensed driver for 5 or more continuous years, and is an excellent driver with no accidents or violations or a driver with only one minor violation during the past 5 years: 5 years • All other drivers: 3 years • Regardless of the above, drivers aged 70 years old, 4 years; drivers aged 71 years or older, 3 years	• Age of license eligibility: 21 years • After 3 or more years have passed since driver obtained a mid-sized motor vehicle license, a semi-mid-sized motor vehicle license, a standard motor vehicle license, or a special large motor vehicle license
Mid-sized motor vehicle license	• Mid-sized motor vehicles • Semi-mid-sized motor vehicles • Standard motor vehicles • Special small motor vehicles • Motorized bicycles	Same as above	• Age of license eligibility: 20 years • After 2 or more years have passed since driver obtained a semi-mid-sized motor vehicle license, a standard motor vehicle license, or a special large motor vehicle license
Semi-mid-sized motor vehicle license	• Semi-mid-sized motor vehicles • Standard motor vehicles • Special small motor vehicles • Motorized bicycles	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 18 years
Standard motor vehicle license	• Standard motor vehicles • Special small motor vehicles • Motorized bicycles	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 18 years

Special large motor vehicle license	• Special large motor vehicles • Special small motor vehicles • Motorized bicycles	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 18 years
Large motorcycle license	• Large motorcycles • Standard motorcycles • Special small motor vehicles • Motorized bicycles	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 18 years
Standard motorcycle license	• Standard motorcycles • Special small motor vehicles • Motorized bicycles	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 16 years
Special small motor vehicle license	• Special small motor vehicles	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 16 years
Motorized bicycle license	• Motorized bicycles	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 16 years
Towing license	See note	Same as above	Age of license eligibility: 18 years

Note: A person possessing a towing license may tow a heavy towed vehicle (a vehicle whose total weight exceeds 750 kg) with a vehicle that can be operated using a large motor vehicle, a mid-sized motor vehicle, a semi-mid-sized motor vehicle, a standard motor vehicle, a special large motor vehicle, a class 2 large motor vehicle, a class 2 mid-sized motor vehicle, a class 2 standard motor vehicle, or a class 2 special large motor vehicle license.

Vehicle types in Japan

Vehicle type	Body size, etc.
Large motor vehicle	A vehicle other than a special large motor vehicle, a large motorcycle, a standard motorcycle, or a special small motor vehicle that has a total vehicle weight of 11,000 kg or more, a maximum loading capacity of 6,500 kg or more, or a passenger capacity of 30 people or more.
Mid-sized motor vehicle	A vehicle other than a large motor vehicle, a special large motor vehicle, a large motorcycle, a standard motorcycle, or a special small motor vehicle that has a total vehicle weight of 7,500 kg or more but less than 11,000 kg, a maximum loading capacity of 4,500 kg or more but less than 6,500 kg, or a passenger capacity of 11 people or more but less than 30 people.
Semi-mid-sized motor vehicle	A vehicle other than a large motor vehicle, a mid-sized motor vehicle, a special large motor vehicle, a large motorcycle, a standard motorcycle, or a special small motor vehicle that has a total vehicle weight of 3,500 kg or more but less than 7,500 kg or a maximum loading capacity of 2,000 kg or more but less than 4,500 kg.
Standard motor vehicle	A vehicle whose body size, etc., does not correspond to the body size, etc., established for a large motor vehicle, a mid-sized motor vehicle, a semi-mid-sized motor vehicle, a special large motor vehicle, a large motorcycle, a standard motorcycle, or a special small motor vehicle.
Special large motor vehicle	A vehicle other than a special small motor vehicle that is a vehicle with continuous tracks (excluding vehicles designated by the Prime Minister), a road roller, a tire roller, a road stabilizer, a rubber tire dozer, a grader, a scraper, a shovel loader, a dump truck, a motor sweeper, a forklift, a truck crane, a straddle carrier, an asphalt finisher, a motorized demolition hammer, a motorized demolition breaker, a fork loader, a vehicle for agricultural work, a rotary snowplow, a turret-type platform truck, a vehicle with a body that can bend during operation, or a vehicle having a special structure designated by the Prime Minister (hereinafter “special motor vehicle”).
Large motorcycle	A two-wheeled vehicle (including a vehicle with a sidecar) with an internal-combustion engine having a total engine displacement of more than 0.400 liters that is not a special large motor vehicle or a special small motor vehicle.
Standard motorcycle	A two-wheeled vehicle (including a vehicle with a sidecar) that is not a special large motor vehicle, a large motorcycle, or a special small motor vehicle.
Special small motor vehicle	A special motor vehicle whose body size fits the description in the columns below and which has a structure that cannot exceed 15 kilometers per hour.

	Body size		
	Length	Width	Height
	4.70 meters or less	1.70 meters or less	2.00 meters or less (a vehicle equipped with a head guard, etc., can have a height of 2.80 meters if its body height is 2.00 meters or less when said guard, etc., is removed)
Motorized bicycle	For a two-wheeled (or specific three- wheeled) vehicle: total engine displacement of 0.050 liters (or 0.125liters if that maximum power is limited 0.4kW or less) or rated output of 0.60 kW; other vehicle: total engine displacement of 0.020 liters or rated output of 0.25 kW.		
* Heavy towed vehicle	A vehicle with structure and/or device that allows towing and a total vehicle weight of more than 750 kg.		