

# AUTOMOBILES AND MOTORCYCLES

The requirements of vehicle ownership and operation on Okinawa are substantially different from what you may be accustomed to. Shipping any U.S. made vehicle to Japan is discouraged. The current Japanese embargo law prohibits any U.S. made vehicle, 1976 or newer, from entering the country. A warning to car owners - the salty air climate on Okinawa is extremely corrosive to metal. Therefore, rust can be a problem. Proper care and maintenance can prevent some rust problems.

There are quite a few expenses involved with owning a vehicle on Okinawa. First, there is the purchase of the vehicle. The prices of used cars on the island are much lower than you would expect to pay in the U.S., with a good car averaging between \$2,600 and \$5,000, depending on the make and year of the car. You don't see many military members driving new cars, because the used cars are dependable and inexpensive. New cars on the island are as expensive, if not more expensive, than in the U.S.

All vehicles must pass a Government of Japan (GOJ) inspection every two years, costing an average of \$300 to \$800. The cost of inspection will normally include the Japanese Compulsory Insurance (JCI) which is the equivalent of liability insurance in the U.S. People can tell when a vehicle's GOJ inspection is due by looking at the window stickers. The color of the large decal in the middle with the large number in the center reveals which year and day the GOJ inspection expires.

JCI is purchased for a two-year period and is required by Japanese law. This insurance covers death and serious injury up to 30,000,000 yen per person and hospitalization up to 1,200,000 yen. When looking for a used car, JCI plays a large part of the price of the vehicle. Normally, vehicles with little or no JCI cost much less than those with one or two years left of JCI. The price of JCI is included in the cost of vehicles sold by off-base car dealers.

The real financial crunch comes when the inspections are due. Military members must have their vehicles undergo a Japanese inspection (called a "JCI") every two years. The Japanese inspection and any necessary repairs to your vehicle may cost an average of \$300 to \$500. Additional costs include two types of insurance (American and Japanese) which average about \$250-300 per year and an annual road tax. The road tax ranges from \$30 for small cars to \$190 for larger ones.

April 1st of every year begins the collection of road taxes throughout Japan. Japanese law mandates the collection of this tax no later than April 30th. Due to the SOFA agreement, all SOFA members are allowed an extension with tax payment due no later than May 31st. It is highly recommend that SOFA members do not wait till the last minute to pay or pick up their new road tax decal. Paying your road tax though your personal insurance company is authorized; however they will add an additional fee for the service. Japanese Fiscal Road Tax collection schedules and locations can be found at the [Joint Services Vehicle Registration Office \(JSVRO\)](#).

**Required Documents:** CURRENT MILITARY REGISTRATION, ORIGINAL PREVIOUS YEAR ROAD TAX RECEIPT, VEHICLE TITLE, JAPANESE COMPULSORY INSURANCE, AND AMERICAN INSURANCE.

**ROAD TAXES MUST BE PAID IN JAPANESE ¥EN ONLY!**

U.S. CURRENCY, CHECKS, & CREDIT CARDS ARE NOT ACCEPTED. COMMUNITY BANK SERVICES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT OR CLOSE TO EACH COLLECTION POINT.

Look at the number at the top of your license plate to see how much you owe:

LICENSE PLATE CATEGORY 40/400, 50/500, 77/78.....	¥7,500
LICENSE PLATE CATEGORY 33/300 (4,500 cc & below).....	¥19,000
LICENSE PLATE CATEGORY 33/300 (above 4,500 cc).....	¥22,000
LICENSE PLATE CATEGORY 11/100,88/800 .....	¥32,000

**MINI-CAR** (yellow plated vehicles) and **MOTORCYCLE** taxes MUST be paid 1 April-31 May to the closest local City, Town, or Village Offices between 0830-1200 and 1300-1700. Bring your receipt to the Joint Service Vehicle Registration Office or tax collection site to receive a current Road Tax sticker.

MINI-CAR ROAD TAX.....	¥3,000
MOTORCYCLE ROAD TAX - 126cc and above.....	¥1,000
125cc and below.....	¥500

**Notes:**

- All vehicles not de-registered before 1 April must pay road tax.
- All vehicles must display the current year Road Tax sticker before 1 June of the same year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION contact the Joint Service Vehicle Registration Office at 645-7481.

Currently, unleaded fuel is offered at the service stations on base at a comparable cost to state-side gas prices for self-service. Gasoline purchased off base is sold by the liter; prices are in yen and costs about three times as much.

There are plenty of car dealers on island, and individuals departing Okinawa always have vehicles for sale in the Kadena Services Auto Resale Lot. Most vehicles are small and are not models you're likely to be familiar with in the United States.

Brand name vehicles include Honda, Mitsubishi, Mazda, Nissan and Toyota, for example, but the models and the standards to which they are built are particular to Japan. Additionally, there are usually a number of "larger" vans - approximately the size of a U.S.-made mini-van - available for purchase.

Joint Services Vehicle Registration Office on Camp Foster can assist with all matters related to vehicle operations, inspections, insurance, etc.

For more information, call 645-7481/3963.