

Business Hours

Business hours are usually between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., with lunch between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m. Business breakfasts are usually not part of the Japanese tradition. Japanese companies are gradually adopting the five-day work week, with some companies working one, two or three Saturdays a month, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday and sometimes every other Saturday morning.

Department stores are open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every-day except one, usually Wednesday or Thursday.

Government departments are open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday and Saturday until 12:00 noon.

Money and Consumption Tax

The Japanese currency is the yen. The current exchange rate (January 1994) is 81.1 yen to the Canadian dollar. Traveller's cheques may be cashed at foreign exchange banks and major hotels, but there is often a charge for the service. U.S dollars traveller's cheques may be converted to yen more easily than Canadian dollars and all payments must be made in yen. Major credit cards can be used at most places, but it is wise to take along a sufficient amount of travellers cheques to cover some expenses which unexpectedly cannot be charged.

A 3% consumption tax, similar to the Canadian GST, may be levied on most goods and services.

Telephones

International and domestic communications are well developed and convenient. Public telephones use coins or pre-paid magnetic cards and are charged by the length of the call. International calls may be made from designated telephones. Very few Japanese businesses now use telexes, but facsimile machines are widely used and it is recommended that a facsimile number be included on your business card.