

LEGAL AGE OF ADULTHOOD LOWERED TO 18

The legal age of adulthood is: ① The age you can make legally binding contracts on your own

② The age from which you are no longer subject to parental custody

On April 1st, 2022, the legal age of adulthood was lowered from 20 to 18.



Those over 18 but under 20
(i.e. those born between April 2nd, 2002 and April 1st, 2004)



became a legal adult from April 1st, 2022.

Those born after April 2nd, 2004



Will become a legal adult on their 18th birthday

What has changed?

The age limit for new entry to Japan with the status of "long term resident" as a "minor/unmarried child", and for permission to change residency status to "long term resident", was changed from under 20 to under 18



You can apply for naturalization from 18, not 20.

From age 18, permission from a parent/guardian will no longer be needed to purchase a mobile phone, sign a rental agreement, apply for a credit card, purchase a car or for other such legally binding contracts.



Multiple nationality holders are required to choose their nationality by age 18 not 20. (※ Those who acquire multiple nationalities after age 18 will be required to choose within 2 years of the acquisition date.)



From age 18, you have the right to petition the family court to request legal gender reassignment.

A child recognised by a father with Japanese nationality may apply for Japanese nationality until age 18 not 20.



The legal age of marriage for women was raised from 16 to 18, making the age of marriage for both men and women the same at 18. (※ married women over 16 as of April 1st, 2022 will continue to be legally married, even if they are under 18).



CAUTION

Despite the lowered age of adulthood, the legal age limit for these matters remains at 20.

Drinking alcohol and smoking

Public gambling (Horse racing, bicycle racing, motorcycle racing, motorboat racing)

Obligation to join the national pension

Inquiries (Call charges apply. No consultation fee)



From age 18, because it is possible to enter into contracts without the consent of a parent/guardian and the legal right to void contracts made as a minor has ended, there are concerns about an increase in scams and other forms of consumer rights violations. If you experience any financial trouble or have any problems, please contact:

Hokkaido Consumer Affairs Center
050-7505-0999 [Mon-Fri] 9AM - 4.30PM

*Japanese only. If you need interpretation for inquiries, please contact Hokkaido Foreign Resident Support Center.

For problems with legal matters:
Japan Legal Support Center Houterasu (Multilingual Information Service) 0570-078377 [Mon-Fri] 9AM - 5PM

For inquiries regarding your status of residence:
Foreign Residents Support Center (FRESC)
0570-011000 [Mon-Fri] 9AM - 5PM

For inquiries regarding nationality:
Contact the Legal Affairs Bureau or local Legal Affairs Bureau that has jurisdiction over your address.