

Outline of New Immigration Procedures: New Security Requirements In Effect For Visitors To Japan

October 2007

1. General Outline

A new law amending the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was announced on May 24, 2006 and will come into effect on November 20, 2007.

New security measures will be implemented as part of a framework for preventing terrorism. As part of this framework, new anti-terrorism measures, which require the submission of personal identification information upon arrival in Japan, are to be implemented,.

Under the new immigration procedures, when foreign nationals arrive in Japan, fingerprints and a facial photograph will be taken by an immigration control officer.

If a foreign national who is required to be fingerprinted and photographed refuses to comply with this requirement, he/she will be denied entry to Japan.

2. Affected persons

All foreign nationals entering Japan are subject to the new immigration procedures, except for the following:

- (1) Special permanent residents
- (2) Persons under 16 years of age
- (3) Those persons performing activities which fall under the status of residence for 'Diplomat' or 'Official'
- (4) Those persons who have been invited by the head of any national administrative organization of Japan
- (5) Those persons who are designated by the Ministry of Justice ordinance as equivalent to either (3) or (4)

3. New Immigration Procedures

Applicants will be required to follow the procedures below.

① A person seeking to enter Japan must present his/her passport to the immigration control officer at a port of entry.

② The visitor will be asked to place the index fingers of both hands on a digital fingerprint reader. The fingerprint information will be read and stored electromagnetically.

③ A facial photograph will then be taken, using the camera located at the top of the digital fingerprint reader.

④ The immigration control officer will then ask the visitor questions about his/her stay in Japan.

⑤ On completion of the above procedures, the visitor will receive his/her passport from the immigration control officer.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why do I need to be fingerprinted and photographed at immigration control?

A. By collecting visitors' personal identification data such as fingerprints and facial photos, we will be able to identify persons considered to pose security risks, such as terrorists, and persons traveling with fraudulent passports. This will help us to prevent terrorist attacks.

Q. What if I am not able to provide a fingerprint from my index finger?

A. If you are not able to provide a fingerprint from your index finger because, for example, that finger is missing from your hand, you will be required to provide a fingerprint from another finger. Please inform your immigration control officer of any such difficulties.

Q. What will happen if I do not provide fingerprints or a facial photograph?

A. Your immigration control officer will carefully examine your case, to determine whether or not you fall into one of the exempt categories. If you do not fall into any exempt category but still refuse to submit personal identification information, your entry will be denied and you will be requested to leave.

Q. How will the submitted personal information be stored and protected?

A. The personal identification information which you provide to us (fingerprints and photographs) is important personal data. As such, we will properly store and protect your data, according to Japanese laws. All necessary measures will be put in place to ensure the safety and security of your data.

For further information please contact:

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