

1. To all cyclists

Due to the high number of traffic accidents involving bicycles, the Traffic Laws were revised in November 2024 to strengthen and add penalties for bicycles. The main changes are as follows:

Prohibition of the use of a smart phone while riding a bicycle,
The penalty for "distracted cycling" is imprisonment for not more than 6 months or a fine of not more than 100,000 yen. If you cause a traffic hazard, you may be imprisoned for up to one year or fined up to 300,000 yen. The penalty for distracted cycling applies to persons 14 years of age or older.

Prohibition of "drunk cycling". Riding a bicycle while under the influence of alcohol is punishable by up to three years in prison or a fine of up to 500,000 yen. A person who provides a bicycle to a person who has been drinking alcohol is also subject to imprisonment for up to three years or a fine of up to ¥500,000. Persons who serve the cyclist alcoholic beverages or ride along on a bicycle are also subject to imprisonment for not more than two years or a fine of not more than ¥300,000.

Of all traffic accidents that occurred in Japan during the five years from 2019 to 2024, more than half of those who died in traffic accidents while riding bicycles had fatal head injuries. Cyclists of all ages should wear helmets when riding a bicycle.

To avoid traffic accidents and prevent traffic injuries, please follow the rules and ride safely.

2. The office will be open on Sundays

During the period when there are many transfers of residents the main office of the City Hall will be open on Sundays.

The office will be open on March 23, March 30 and April 6. Hours will be from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The office will be open at the Residential Affairs Division and the Health Insurance and Pension Division.

The Citizen's Life Division handles the issuance of copies of resident registers and abstracts of family registers, applications for seal registration, issuance of seal registration certificates, and notification of resident changes.

Notifications of births, marriages, deaths, and other family records are kept in the service room on the southwest corner of the first floor of the main office building.

The Health and Pension Section handles the acquisition and loss of National Health Insurance status.

You are welcome to use these services.

3. Be careful not to pour garbage or oil down the drain.

Garbage and oil from home and restaurant kitchens can clog sewer pipes and cause sewage to overflow from vats and manholes. In addition, if you use a septic tank, the flow of garbage and oil can impair the treatment function and cause the unit to malfunction.

To prevent this, please take the following precautions:

- Do not flush anything other than toilet paper.
- Wipe off grease before washing used utensils and dishes.
- Soups and other liquids should be drained with a cloth before flushing.
- Dispose of used frying oil at a cooking oil collection site or use a commercially available coagulant to solidify the oil before disposing of it in the trash.
- If your restaurant has an oil separator, clean it frequently.

In the unlikely event that a drainage pipe becomes clogged and sewage does not flow, contact a designated Tochigi City drainage equipment installation shop.

4. Mental health starts with good sleep

Spring is a time of big environmental changes, such as job and school transfers, and it is easy to become stressed. To maintain mental health, a healthy lifestyle is essential. Sleep is one of the most effective ways to recover from fatigue and relieve stress.

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare recommends the following measures to ensure adequate hours of sleep and good quality sleep for each age group.

Adults should get the amount of sleep they need, aiming for at least 6 hours or more. Review your lifestyle and sleeping environment to improve the rested feeling you get when you wake up in the morning.

Older people should get the amount of sleep they need, aiming for no more than 8 hours, as excessive hours in bed are a health risk.

Children should aim for 9-12 hours of sleep for elementary school students and 8-10 hours for middle and high school students. Get some sun in the morning, eat a good breakfast, exercise during the day, and avoid the habit of staying up late.

Sleep is often neglected when we're busy, but let's start with what we can do to maintain our mental and physical health.