

## 1. Notice for Filing Municipal and Prefectural Tax for Fiscal Year 2026

In Japan, if you work for a company, “income tax” is automatically deducted from your monthly salary. However, this amount is only an estimate and not exact. At the end of the year in December, your company calculates the correct tax amount for the year, taking into account your income, family situation, insurance premiums, and other factors. This is called “year-end adjustment.” If you have overpaid, the excess will be refunded. This refund is called a “tax refund.” If you have underpaid, you will need to pay the difference. Most people usually get a small refund.

Income tax is a national tax, but there is also “municipal tax and prefectural tax,” which are taxes paid to the city and prefecture where you live. These taxes are based on last year’s income. If you earned more last year, you will pay more this year.

In many cases, you do not need to file a separate declaration because the company sends your income information to the city hall during year-end adjustment. However, if your company does not handle year-end adjustment, or if you have no income and need a non-taxable certificate, you must file at city hall.

The filing period this year is from February 16 to March 16, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays. Filing is by appointment. Decide on your preferred filing location, date, and time, then call the dedicated reservation number and follow the voice guidance to make a reservation.

Reservation period is from January 20 to March 15. Reservations can be made until the day before your desired date. Same-day reservations are not accepted. If you do not understand Japanese, please have someone who does assist you.

## 2. Paying National Pension When You Turn 20

In Japan, when you turn 20, you enroll in the National Pension. This applies to everyone with resident registration in Japan, including foreign residents. Nationality does not matter. People who are not enrolled in a company's employee pension scheme must join.

At age 20, you will receive a “Basic Pension Number Notice” and “National Pension Payment Notice” from the Japan Pension Service. You pay the pension premium monthly. For fiscal year 2025, the premium is 17,510 yen per month.

For those with no income or students, there are exemption and deferment systems that allow you not to pay. If you wish to apply for exemption, go to the Tochigi Pension Office, the Insurance & Pension Division on the 2nd floor of city hall, or the regional promotion sections at branch offices.

Joining the National Pension provides three benefits: 1. When you grow older, you can receive the old-age basic pension. 2. If you become disabled due to illness or injury, you can receive a disability basic pension. 3. If a contributor dies, their family can receive a survivor's basic pension.

Additionally, when returning to your home country, you may be eligible for a lump-sum withdrawal payment.

Foreign residents who do not pay the pension may face consequences for their residence status. Systems are being introduced that can prevent approval of status changes or renewals if payments are not made. When applying for permanent residency, payment history for the past two years is strictly reviewed. Non-payment or exemption periods may result in denial of application, so be sure to pay.

### **3. Transition to My Number Health Insurance Card (Reminder from December 2024 Issue)**

The My Number Health Insurance Card allows you to use your My Number Card as a health insurance card at hospitals, dental clinics, and pharmacies. Foreign residents with a residence card and My Number Card are eligible.

From December 2, 2024, the issuance of traditional health insurance cards ended, and the system transitioned to primarily using the My Number Health Insurance Card. For a period, traditional health insurance cards could still be used.

However, since December 2, 2025, traditional paper or card health insurance cards can no longer be used.

Those who do not yet have a My Number Card, or who have a card but have not registered it for health insurance use, should have received a “Qualification Confirmation Card.” At the hospital, present either the My Number Health Insurance Card or this confirmation card.

In the future, the My Number Health Insurance Card will be the standard. Apply for a My Number Card at city hall or other locations. Once issued, register it for use as a health insurance card. The first-time registration is done at a hospital or pharmacy by placing your My Number Card on a card reader, verifying your identity via face recognition or a 4-digit PIN, and agreeing to provide your information.

Unlike traditional cards that were used monthly, the My Number Health Insurance Card must be presented at each visit. Each time, identity verification and consent for information provision are required via the card reader.