

Japan lowers its age of adulthood to 18

Effective April 1, 2022, the amended Civil Code lowering the age of adulthood from 20 will be enforced. People who were born from April 2, 2002 to April 1, 2004 will become adults on April 1, 2022. People who were born on or after April 2, 2004 will become adults on their 18th birthday. The new Civil Code has the new definition of adulthood and child partially, which may affect your immigration application procedures such as resident status or acquisition of nationality. So, please pay attention to these matters.



Things that change

- The age limit when changing status of residence to “Long-Term Resident (*Teijusha* in Japanese)” as “minor and/or unmarried biological child” will be for those under and not including 18 years of age.
- Age requirement for naturalization that was from 20 years of age will change to 18 years of age. The age at which a child recognized by a Japanese father to acquire nationality will be for those under and not including 18 years of age.
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- The age at which a child recognized by a Japanese father to acquire nationality will be for those under and not including 18 years of age.
- For those with multiple nationalities, the age at which nationality must be chosen will change from before reaching 20 years of age (or by the age of 22) to before reaching 18 years of age (or by the age of 20).
- Contracts for smartphones and independent housing, credit cards, or loans such as to purchase a car can be made from 18 years of age without the consent of the guardian. (A contract may be denied if the loan exceeds repayment capacity.)
- The age of women to marry will be raised from over 16 years of age to over 18 years of age. Women who have reached the age of 16 as at April 1, 2022 can still marry under the age of 18.

Things that do not change

- The legal age of drinking, smoking, or gambling remain at 20.
- Mandatory participation to the National Pension Plan remains at 20.
- ※ At 18, you will be responsible for certain things as adults, including entering into contracts such as sign up for credit cards. Needless to say, it is very important to scrutinize all the terms and conditions before signing a contract. Perhaps you should consult with someone who is well-versed in these matters. Here are some numbers you can call to ask for legal advice when you face a problem.
 - To consult for problems related to consumer affairs:
Consumer Hotline: Dial 188 (Only Japanese is spoken.)
 - Houterasu (Japan Legal Support Center)
0570-078377 Hours: 9:00-17:00 (weekdays only)

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