

Kumamoto Prefecture JET Safety Guide



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Emergency Contact Information:

Police	110
Fire/Ambulance	119
Coast Guard (sea rescue)	118
Kumamoto Prefecture Tourism and International Policy Division	096-333-2159 fax: 096-381-3343
Kumamoto Prefecture BOE Compulsory Education Division	096-333-2705 fax: 096-385-6718
Tokyo English Lifeline	03-5774-0992 (9am – 11pm)
AJET Peer Support Group (PSG)	050-5534-5566 (8pm – 7am)



Travel Safety

If you plan to be away from the city you live in for an extended period of time, and even if you are traveling in Japan, please let your supervisor and CO know where you will be traveling and staying at. That way if an emergency occurs in the city you live in, or in the location where you are traveling to, it will be much easier for someone to help you. Also, it's highly recommended that you **register with your consulate or embassy.**

Personal Safety

In general, Japan is a very safe country. The occurrence of crime and violent crime is comparatively low and most enjoy a feeling of security and safety during their stay in Japan. However, crimes do occur so please remember to do simple things like locking your doors on your home and car, avoid walking alone at night, and generally be aware of your surroundings. Do not neglect your personal items while in public.

What to do in cases of stalking or harassment

1. Notify your BOE and supervisor of the situation.
2. Notify local police if necessary.
3. Document EVERYTHING, take photos, make notes, save messages to give to assist police in an investigation if necessary.
4. If you are unsure or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact a PA.

Ambulance & Fire

Dial 119 → On public payphones, press the red button (free call).

1. Tell the operator what the emergency is:

- If there is a fire: *Kaji desu!*
- For an ambulance: *Kyukyusha wo onegai shimasu!*



火事です!
救急車をお願いします!

2. Give the operator your information:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------|
| • Your Address: | <i>Jusho wa (your address) desu.</i> | 住所は、～です。 |
| • Nearby landmark to your house: | <i>Ie no chikaku ni (landmark) ga arimasu.</i> | 家の近くに～があります。 |
| • Your Name: | <i>Watashi wa (name) desu.</i> | 私は～です。 |
| • Your Telephone Number: | <i>Denwa bango wa (number) desu.</i> | 電話番号は～です。 |

After you have provided this information, do not hang up. Stay on the line until help arrives. If possible, send someone outside to wait for the ambulance or fire engine.

Police

Dial 110 → On public payphones, press the red button (this is a free call).



1. Tell the operator what the emergency is:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| • For accidents | <i>Kotsu jiko desu.</i> | 交通事故です。 |
| • For robberies | <i>Dorobo desu.</i> | 泥棒です。 |
| • For altercations | <i>Kenka desu.</i> | 喧嘩です。 |

2. Give the operator your information:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------|
| • Your Address: | <i>Jusho wa (your address) desu.</i> | 住所は、～です。 |
| • Nearby landmark to your house: | <i>Ie no chikaku ni (landmark) ga arimasu.</i> | 家の近くに～があります。 |
| • Your Name: | <i>Watashi wa (name) desu.</i> | 私は～です。 |
| • Your Telephone Number: | <i>Denwa bango wa (number) desu.</i> | 電話番号は～です。 |

After you have provided this information, do not hang up. Stay on the line until help arrives. If possible, send someone outside to wait for the police car.

Steps to Take Before a Natural Disaster:

1. Know where your nearest evacuation center is and how to get there. Schools and community centers are often used for this purpose. It can be useful to walk to the location of your evacuation center a few times to ensure that you could find your way there even in the dark. *If you do not know how to find information about local evacuation centers, ask your supervisor!*
2. Exchange phone number and contact information with your supervisor, Area Leaders, Prefectural Advisors, and possibly even other JETs in your area. Phone lines and electricity may go down during a disaster, so it could be useful to discuss alternate ways to contact people, or even to arrange a meeting point to go to in the event of a disaster.
3. Photocopy your passport and other important documents. Store a few copies at work.
4. Know your neighbors and make them aware of the number of people living in your home.
5. Know how to contact Japanese emergency services.
6. Memorize and be able to say your address in Japanese in case you need to tell emergency services where you are.
7. Know what actions to take during and after each kind of disaster (more details are included in this guide).
8. Register at your home country's embassy/consulate.
9. Prepare an emergency pack/go-bag. You can purchase bags pre-packed with items on websites such as Amazon or Rakuten, or you can put together a bag yourself. Details on what to include are below.

What to put in your emergency pack/go-bag:

- Water (four liters/one gallon per person per day. Change water every three to five months)
- Food (canned or instant. Consider special dietary needs, infants, pets)
- Flashlight with spare batteries and bulbs
- Lighter
- Candles
- Radio (battery operated with spare batteries)
- Work gloves (for when moving debris)
- Helmet
- Hand sanitizer and face masks (to prevent the spread of viruses in the evacuation center)
- Feminine hygiene supplies, infant supplies, toilet paper
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Prescribed medications and glasses if you normally wear contacts
- First aid kit
- Blanket
- Yen in small bills (ATMs may not work after a disaster) and coins/phone cards for public phones.
- Photocopies of important documents (passport, residence card, bankbook, etc.)



Store enough for three to five days. Place emergency supplies and your phone in places where they are less likely to be knocked over or buried by falling objects. For example, on the floor under a sturdy table near your door. Be sure to place a pair of slippers near your bed in case there's shattered glass caused by an earthquake or typhoon.

For more detailed information on preparing yourself for a disaster, the Disaster Preparedness Booklet issued by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government is a great resource. You can find the booklet here:

<https://www.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/english/guide/bosai/index.html>

What to Do After a Disaster

- Check your immediate surroundings for fire, gas leaks, broken glass and other hazards. Deal with hazards if possible and if safe to do so.
- Contact one friend/relative in your home country. They can relay information to others who are worried about you, since the Kumamoto Prefectural BOE, CLAIR, embassies, and other government services will not have the time/resources to deal with worried family members during a large-scale disaster.
- Monitor apps, local TV, and radio for evacuation information. If available in your area, listen to AFN 810AM for information in English.
- Confirm your safety with your base school/BOE, PAs, and CLAIR. More information on that below, as well as more information about what action to take before and after specific kinds of natural disasters.

Gas Leaks

If you notice a gas leak in your home, follow these guidelines:

- Do not turn on the ventilation fan or operate any electrical devices. Sparks can potentially ignite the gas.
- Close the taps and gas meter valve. To turn the gas off, turn the levers so that they are perpendicular to the pipe and rotate the knob to CLOSE (閉).
- Open all the windows and doors and sweep gas out the door with a broom (gas is heavier than air and will settle toward the ground.)
- Call your gas company (you can get the information from your supervisor) and inform them of the leak.
- Wait outside until they arrive.

Natural Disasters in Kumamoto

Earthquakes

Japan is particularly prone to earthquakes. In April 2016, Kumamoto experienced two incredibly strong earthquakes which resulted in many homes and buildings being destroyed and people being forced to move to temporary emergency accommodation. It even caused severe damage to the famous Kumamoto Castle at the heart of the city, and it is estimated that the castle will not be fully restored until 2038.

In Japan the “Shindo” scale is used much more frequently than the Richter scale when talking about the strength of earthquakes. This scale ranges from Shindo 1 to Shindo 7 and measures the intensity of an earthquake at a given location. This is different to the Richter scale which measures the strength of the earthquake only at the epicenter.

In 2007 the Japan Meteorological Agency began providing Earthquake Early Warnings through media such as TV and radio. Please note that these warnings, when accurate, may give you just a couple seconds of notice. Preparation in the eventual event of an earthquake is of the utmost importance.

During a strong earthquake

If you are inside:

DROP→ lowering your point of gravity will help you stay steady during a tremor.

COVER→ protect your head and neck. Take shelter underneath something sturdy such as a table.

HOLD→ hold onto something to keep yourself steady in case there are any violent tremors. Although most last only 10 seconds, any one could become increasingly worse and last for a few minutes.



If you are on public transport:

- Follow the same guidelines as above.
- Drop (away from windows), cover, and hold.
- Stay calm and follow instructions from the conductor/staff.

If you are outdoors:

- Move to an open space away from buildings.
- If you're in an urban area, be aware of broken glass, bricks, and cement falling from buildings. Use your bag, purse, etc. to protect your head and neck.



If you are in a car:

- Pull over immediately and away from potential falling debris (e.g. trees, buildings, overhead wires, overpasses).
- Turn on the radio for emergency reports.
- Wait in the car if you can.
- Make sure your car is not blocking rescue vehicles.
- If you must evacuate, leave the car doors unlocked and the keys in the ignition (so rescue workers can move your car)



After a strong earthquake

- Wait until the tremors subside. If you rush outside you could still be hit by falling objects.
- After the tremors subside, open doors and/or windows to avoid being trapped if there are after-shocks.

- Check your immediate surroundings for fire, gas leaks, broken glass, and other hazards.
- Turn off your gas immediately and be careful about flames from lighters until you confirm there hasn't been a gas leak.
- Monitor local TV and radio for evacuation information (If available in your area, listen to AFN 810AM for information in English).
- Aftershocks may occur after a strong earthquake, so begin to move towards an evacuation center if you are not in a safe area.
- If you do decide to evacuate, turn off your circuit breaker before you leave the house.
- Do not use the elevators, even if it seems like the shaking has stopped. Aftershocks are likely, so use the stairs.

JETs in coastal areas and near rivers:

- Evacuate to high ground immediately. A tsunami may occur after a strong earthquake, so do not wait for an official tsunami evacuation order.
- If you cannot reach high ground within 5-10 minutes, take refuge on the upper floor of a well-built tall building.

If you are trapped under rubble:

- Cover your mouth, bang rhythmically on a pipe or wall, or send a text for help instead of shouting. This is to conserve energy and oxygen.

Tsunamis

Tsunamis tend to be a less common occurrence than earthquakes. However, they can cause a lot of destruction in coastal communities and can sometimes travel further inland via rivers. Tsunamis can be triggered when a large earthquake occurs at sea and the waves are sometimes powerful enough to wash away cars, boats, and sometimes even buildings. If a tsunami warning is issued and you live near the coast, **move to higher ground or a well-built tall building.**



Heavy Rain and Flooding

Japan's rainy season, or "tsuyu," occurs from the beginning of June to the middle of July. During the rainy season there may be stretches of days with sunny or calm weather, but sudden onsets of heavy rain may also occur and cause flooding or landslides. It's essential to monitor the forecast and watch for emergency and evacuation alerts from your phone.



In July 2020, the Hitoyoshi, Kuma, and Ashikita areas suffered severe damage from flooding and landslides caused by record-breaking heavy rain. The flooding was strong enough to destroy bridges and overturn cars. This occurred very early in the morning with little warning, so being prepared to evacuate at any time is crucial.

Typhoons

The period between July and October is commonly referred to as "Typhoon Season," and typhoons are particularly common in August and September. In many cases, a typhoon will bring nothing more than some rain and some gusts of wind. However, strong typhoons can cause flooding and landslides. In addition, transportation services such as trains, buses, and planes may also be affected.

Before a typhoon

- Make sure your phones, portable chargers and other devices are fully charged.
- Bring in outdoor plants and other objects that could be blown away by heavy winds.
- Ensure that larger objects are secure (bicycles, laundry poles, tape your washing machine lid down etc.)
- Close your exterior window shutters or put up cardboard/wooden boards.
- Put masking tape on your windows in an asterisk shape to reduce the risk of them shattering into small pieces.
- Close your windows and avoid sleeping near them.
- Wear clothing to bed that you can immediately go outside in.
- Place a pair of slippers near your bed in case of broken glass.
- Prepare a “go-bag” in case you need to evacuate after the typhoon.



During a typhoon

- DO NOT GO OUTSIDE
- Make sure to stay on the second floor if you are in a place that is vulnerable to flooding.
- Stay away from your windows.

Volcanic Eruptions



Kumamoto is home to an active volcano called “Mt. Aso.” Its last eruption was in 2016, but it is often possible to see a plume of smoke rising from the crater. Mt. Aso’s caldera is one of the largest in the world with a diameter of 25km and a circumference of 100km. If you live close to Mt. Aso, it would be good to discuss with your supervisor about the best course of action in the event of an eruption. Even in Kumamoto City you may find a layer of ash on your balcony or car after an eruption.

However, thanks to this volcanic landscape Kumamoto has some of the best water in Japan. The water which is piped into homes in Kumamoto City is water which has filtered through the volcanic rock and collected in underground pools in Aso, making it rich in minerals.

Confirming Your Safety After a Natural Disaster

After an earthquake with a *shindo* of Lower 6 and above or a serious emergency of a similar degree, it is essential for the Kumamoto Prefecture Tourism and International Policy Division to confirm the safety of JET participants as quickly as possible. After securing your physical safety, please...

1. **Contact your base school / BOE and respond to the PA safety confirmation email to confirm your safety as soon as possible.** Include your current location, whether you are safe/need help, and any other relevant information. **If multiple disasters occur in a short period, (e.g. earthquake followed by a tsunami), contact the PAs and base school / BOE after EACH disaster.**
2. **Respond to the CLAIR safety confirmation system (via email/phone).** Please note that responding to this does not inform the Kumamoto Prefecture Tourism and International Policy Division of your condition, so we ask that you confirm your safety with the PAs as well.

CLAIR Safety Confirmation System (Emergency Call) and Contact Information Survey.

These are two separate systems. Please register to both using the links below.

1. Safety Confirmation System:

<https://asp2.emc-call.jp/clair/> or <https://asp2.emc-call2nd.jp/clair/>

Your login ID and password are both the final nine digits of your JET Number, omitting the first two digits (20).

2. Contact Information Survey:

<https://goo.gl/u1gVT2>

Login ID: JET Number (11 digits beginning with 20)

Password: Date of birth (YYYYMMDD)

If your registered method of contact is telephone, guidance will be in Japanese. If you would prefer correspondence in English, please choose email as your preferred contact method.

In an emergency, the system will send a message to JET participants by the contact method they have registered in the system. Registered participants will receive a message from the e-mail address clair@asp2.emc-call.jp with a subject title stating the emergency, for example: 【Earthquake】 Safety confirmation_Kumamoto. The body of these messages will include a URL that will allow you to confirm your safety, **which is required.**

The CLAIR Safety Confirmation System is based by prefecture/city, so you may receive safety confirmation requests even when you are not physically near the site of a disaster. In this case, **a response is still required.**

If phone landlines are down or cell service is unavailable after a disaster, please contact your base school/BOE via the Disaster Emergency Message Dial System (171) described in detail below. In the event of multiple disasters that occur in a short period (e.g. an earthquake followed by a tsunami), please contact your base school/BOE after each disaster occurs.

What to Do if Phone Landlines or Cell Service is Unavailable

Five Zero Japan

The “Five Zero Japan” initiative allows you to access Wi-Fi networks which are not usually available to the public by using the password 00000JAPAN during a large-scale disaster.

Disaster Emergency Message Dial System (171) 災害用伝言ダイヤル (171)

During a disaster, damage to infrastructure and high call volumes can interrupt landlines and cellular service. The Disaster Emergency Message Dial is a voice message system that is activated during severe emergencies that allows individuals to use any landline phone to record messages and register them to any landline phone number within the disaster-affected area. Others can then verify their safety by accessing the system and listening to the registered messages.

The prompts given to you in order to access this system are only in Japanese, but the process is written below in English.

Recording a message:

1. Dial 171.
2. Dial 1 to indicate that you want to record a message.
3. Dial the appropriate phone number according to your job type.
Municipal ALTs – enter the number of your board of education
Prefectural ALTs – enter the number of your base school
Municipal CIRs – enter the number of your office
Prefectural CIRs – enter the number for the Tourism and International Policy Division
4. Wait for the tone to start recording, or dial 1 and then # to start recording (this will depend on the type of phone you are using to access the system).
5. Leave a message of up to 30 seconds.
6. Dial 9 and # to end the call.



**Only TEN messages can be recorded and registered to any one telephone number using this system. If you have a landline, it is a good idea to record a message regarding your safety and whereabouts and register it with your home phone number as well.

**This service can only be used to register messages to LANDLINE phone numbers. The system can be accessed via mobile phones, but cannot be used to register messages to mobile numbers.

**Using public pay phones to access the Disaster Emergency Message Dial System is NOT free. Be sure to prepare a few 10 yen coins in your emergency kit for use at public pay phones during a disaster.

Checking Messages:

You can check your own recorded messages and the messages that others have registered.

1. Dial 171.
2. Dial 2 to indicate that you want to listen to messages.
3. Dial your own phone number (if you want to hear your own messages) or the phone number of the person whose safety you are trying to confirm.
4. Dial 1 and then # and/or just stay on the line (this will depend on the type of phone you are using to access the system).
5. Listen to messages (messages will be played in reverse chronological order).
6. Dial 9 and # to end the call.

Disaster Emergency Message Boards 災害用伝言板

The Disaster Emergency Message Boards offer mobile phone users a way to inform others of their situation and confirm the safety of others after a major disaster has occurred.

Accessing the boards:

How you access the Disaster emergency Message Boards will differ based on the provider and phone you have. Because this system is only activated during a serious disaster (such as an earthquake that registers at a Lower 6 or higher on the JMA seismic intensity scale), you may not be able to access certain features of the Disaster emergency Message Boards, or even the boards themselves, at any other time. Please consult your mobile service provider for more information about how to use the Message Boards.

Disasters Requiring Evacuation

Evacuations will likely occur after an earthquake when fires are spreading or buildings are in danger of being destroyed by landslides, or when a tsunami is expected. Police and fire authorities will issue evacuation advice. There are three levels of evacuation warnings:

1. **Evacuation Preparation** 避難準備 (ひなんじゅんび *hinan junbi*)

The lowest evacuation warning. There is no immediate need to evacuate, but residents are encouraged to begin preparations should the need arise.

2. **Evacuation Recommended** 避難勧告 (ひなんかんこく *hinan kankoku*)

Residents are highly encouraged to evacuate to their nearest refuge area.

3. **Evacuation Order** 避難指示 (ひなんしじ *hinan shiji*)

Remaining in the area is extremely dangerous and all residents should evacuate to the nearest refuge area immediately.



If a disaster requiring evacuation occurs during work hours, follow the instructions given to you by your BOE or school.

If a disaster occurs outside of work hours and an evacuation order is issued, proceed immediately to the closest refuge area.

Upon feeling a strong earthquake, JETs in coastal areas and near rivers should immediately evacuate to high ground. If you cannot reach high ground within 5-10 minutes, take refuge on the upper floor of a well-built tall building.

Useful Phrases During a Disaster

助けて	<i>Tasukete</i>	Help me
避難所はどこですか	<i>Hinanjo wa doko desu ka</i>	Where is the evacuation center?
どこに行けばいいですか	<i>Doko ni ikeba ii desu ka</i>	Where should I go?
ケガをしました	<i>Kega wo shimashita</i>	I am injured.
無事です	<i>Buji desu</i>	I am safe.
お水をください	<i>Omizuwo kudasai</i>	Can I have some water?
電話を貸してください	<i>Denwa wo kashite kudasai</i>	Please lend me a phone.
救急車を呼んでください	<i>Kyuukyuusha wo yonde kudasai</i>	Please call an ambulance.

Useful Apps

Safety Tips

This app was created by the Japan Tourism Agency and is intended for tourists in Japan. It provides mobile alerts for earthquakes of Shindo level 4 or higher, tsunami warnings, and weather warnings. It also offers communication cards with useful phrases in Japanese and English.



Yurukeru Call

This is a popular app in Japan, with over 5 million downloads. It provides earthquake early warning alerts via push notifications and provides real-time information. Make sure you select your location and the intensity level you wish to receive notifications from, otherwise you will constantly receive notifications for even small earthquakes in remote prefectures.



Pocket Shelter

This app combines tourism and disaster prevention by providing information on restaurants, sightseeing spots, and evacuation points. After downloading map data the app can be used offline and can help you move to a safe area after a disaster. The app also displays information in multiple languages in an emergency.



Other useful telephone numbers and websites

Sexual Crime Help Line: 0120-834-381

Kumamoto Police Interpretation Center (emergency only)
0963-810-110, extension 4764
M-F 9:30am – 6:15pm:

Association of Medical Doctors Abroad: Find a medical professional who speaks your language
TEL: 03-6233-9266
Daily: 9:00am-8:00pm

For more information about Earthquake Early Warnings
www.jma.go.jp/jma/en/Activities/ew.html

Kumamoto International Foundation (KIF) Disaster Information Email Service

Kumamoto International Foundation has a mail magazine called Anshin Anzen (Safe and Secure). If you sign up for this free service, you will get monthly updates on disaster prevention and living information relevant to Kumamoto. You will also receive information about evacuations (in English) if such notices are issued. To sign up for the KIF Disaster Information Email Service, please do the following:

- Send an email to: kifmailadd@kumamoto-if.or.jp
- Write 1 in the subject line.
- Leave the body of the email blank.
- You will receive an email with a link to a registration page.

