

SOFA Entry/Re-Entry Stamp
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Are you or your family considering a trip out of Japan?

If your civilian Family Members depart Japan with the intent of returning **make sure they get an Exit/Re-Entry Stamp in their passports prior to leaving Japan**. Although Soldiers are not required to get this stamp, Family Members and U.S. civilian employees must get this stamp. All Family Members and U.S. civilian employees should have a passport with a "SOFA stamp" inside which allows them to enter and exit Japan without much difficulty, compared with other U.S. citizens not affiliated in any way with the military who must enter Japan under a tourist visa or some other kind of visa. Family Members and civilian employees will have trouble-free ingress and egress from Japan, provided they obtain an "Exit/Re-Entry" stamp for their passport before departing the country on TDY or leave. This stamp can be obtained from the Military Personnel Division (MPD) on Torii Station, the Provost Marshal's Office on Camp Foster, or the AMC terminal on Kadena Air Base. Failure to obtain the Exit/Re-Entry stamp may result in the person having to enter Japan on a 90 day tourist visa. In order to stay for more than 90 days the person will have to provide documentation to Japanese immigration proving they have SOFA status. This proof generally involves obtaining a memorandum from the international law section of the SJA office and taking this memorandum to the immigration office to void the tourist visa stamp and obtaining a SOFA stamp. You or your family can avoid this hassle by getting the Exit/Re-Entry stamp before departure.

Where and how to get an Exit/Re-Entry Stamp?

Torii Station --MPD, Building 216, Room 116. Phone number: 644-5419. Stamps are provided on a walk-in basis from 0730 to 1630 daily. The customers must provide MPD with the passport, a copy of PCS orders or employment verification documents stating they are assigned or stationed in Japan. Family members must be command sponsored to receive the stamp. When entering Japan a SOFA stamp will be placed on the passport by the Immigration officer, if you do not have a SOFA stamp they won't be able to place the Exit/Re-Entry stamp. If you have a new passport (without a SOFA stamp) please provide them with the old/cancelled passport for verification.

Camp Foster -- (PMO Office (Building 496) from 0730 -1630. Phone number: 645-2217. Documents needed:

1. Orders, Current SOFA Stamp or Certificate of Employment/Area Clearance Letter
2. ID Card
3. Passport

Kadena Air Base -- AMC Terminal Customs/Immigration Office, 634-2217, open 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. The AMC terminal will issue the stamp no earlier than 72 hours in advance of the departure time. Must bring passport, ID card, tickets or travel itinerary, and proof of SOFA status (Sponsor's Orders with family member name on it or command sponsorship documents).

Any questions about getting the exit/re-entry stamp should be directed to the above offices. If you or your family forgot to get a stamp prior to departure and need a "SOFA letter" to take to Japanese immigration, please contact the international law section of the Staff Judge Advocate office at 644-4782. May, 2011.