

State of Emergency announced by the Government of Japan

On April 7, 2020, the Government of Japan declared a State of Emergency for a period of one month effective today until May 6, 2020, and will cover Tokyo, Osaka, Kanagawa, Saitama, Chiba, Hyogo and Fukuoka prefectures, whose governors will exercise specific authorities to implement local measures to combat COVID-19.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe provided the following further details in making this announcement:

- Those infected with COVID-19 who have mild symptoms or no symptoms will stay at hotels and other venues, instead of hospitals, so as to alleviate the burden on medical institutions.
- The general population is encouraged to refrain from going out for non-essential purposes with a view to reducing people-to-people contact by 70 to 80 percent. Bars, night-clubs, karaoke and live-music houses, in particular, should be avoided as they are more likely to meet the “3Cs” risk criteria (closed spaces; crowded places; and close-contact setting). Going to a gathering or an event is also discouraged.
- Tele-work (work at home) and other measures will be encouraged.
- Business owners including restaurant owners are asked to take preventive measures such as ensuring ventilation and keeping distance among visitors at the venue.
- When going out, it is advised to keep a distance from other people.
- The State of Emergency is not intended to translate into lockdowns, as is the case in other countries. Public transportation will continue to operate, including trains and buses. Roads will not be closed.
- In cooperation with municipalities, normal operations of basic and essentials services will continue, including the provision of public utility services, such as electricity, gas, telecommunication, financial services, garbage collection and incineration.

The State of Emergency allows prefectural and municipal levels of government to call for specific action to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. Many businesses and services are expected to close or reduce to essential services during this period.

Emergency services (Fire, Police, SDF) will continue to operate but will operate on reduced shifts which may cause a minor delay in the event of a catastrophic emergency. However, these organizations are planning for potential disaster response contingencies that would also enable social distancing, if required;

Transportation:

- Public transit will remain open although may reduce in frequency
- Several train lines and domestic airlines are expected to reduce service
- Taxis will remain in operation with enhanced cleaning protocols

Retail Services:

- Facilities that are considered essential will be permitted to open, while being asked to take measures to limit contact and enforce social distancing, including grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores, banks, hotels, factories, public bathhouses, government offices
- Most schools and universities will be closed.

Facilities that will be permitted to remain open, depending on their use:

- Some schools, daycare centres, care facilities for elderly

Facilities that will be closed:

- Leisure facilities including bowling alleys, pachinko parlours, karaoke clubs, and pubs will be asked to close
- Major department stores are generally closing voluntarily
- Delivery through Japan's major delivery companies will continue

As measures may differ in the locality where you live or stay, you should verify with the prefectural government to confirm what specific measures apply to you under this state of emergency.

Source Canadian Embassy