

Japan

## Overview

Many domestic and imported products alike are subject to product testing and cannot be sold in Japan without certification of compliance with prescribed standards. Knowledge of, and adherence to, these standards and their testing procedures can be the key to making or breaking a sale.

Product requirements in Japan fall into two categories: technical regulations (or mandatory standards) and non-mandatory voluntary standards. Compliance with regulations and standards is also governed by a certification system in which inspection results determine whether or not approval (certification/quality mark) is granted. Approval is generally required before a product can be sold in the market or even displayed at a trade show; unapproved medical equipment may be displayed at a trade show if accompanied by a sign indicating that the product is not yet approved for sale. To affix a mandatory quality mark or a voluntary quality mark requires prior product type approval and possibly factory inspections for quality control assessment. Regulated products must bear the appropriate mandatory mark when shipped to Japan in order to clear Japanese Customs. Regulations may apply not only to the product itself, but also to packaging, marking or labeling requirements, testing, transportation and storage, and installation. Compliance with "voluntary" standards and obtaining "voluntary" marks of approval can greatly enhance a product's sales potential and help win Japanese consumer acceptance.

There are two ongoing trends in Japan regarding standards. One is a move toward standards reform and the other towards harmonizing Japanese standards with prevailing international standards. While reform is underway, there are numerous laws containing Japan-specific mandatory standards most of which have not been translated into English. Therefore, it is important that a Japanese agent or partner be fully aware of the wide variety of standards in effect that could impact the sale of the imported product.

The Japan External Trade Organization website contains numerous documents on Japan's standards and regulations, including import procedures, quarantine periods, technical requirements, etc. The website also details relevant laws, ordinances and amendments concerning import standards and regulations.

For more information see: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/regulations/>

## Product Liability Insurance

Japanese business entities are subject to various laws and product safety standards, which vary depending upon the industry or product segment. Japanese importers and distributors of foreign products, in general, cover product liability risk through the product liability clause in their own liability insurance. The covered items and exemptions may vary from underwriter to underwriter and among industry segments. Whether the U.S. exporter will be required to buy product liability insurance to cover worldwide or specific

overseas markets for their exports will be subject to negotiation with the firm's Japanese business partner and the advice of legal counsel.

## **Standards Organizations**

The Japan Industrial Standards Committee (JISC) plays a central role in standards activities in Japan (<http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng>). Its mission consists of four elements: 1) establishment and maintenance of Japan Industrial Standards (JIS); 2) administration of accreditation and certification; 3) participation in international standards activities; and 4) development of measurement standards and technical infrastructure for standardization. JISC publishes plans each month for the preparation of new and revised JIS drafts on its website at <http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/jis-act/drafts-preparation.html>.

Existing JIS standards are reviewed and revised every five years. Once a new or revised draft JIS standard has been prepared, JISC posts these draft standards for a sixty-day public comment period. The JISC website also provides information regarding how foreign entities may participate in the JIS drafting process. A list of newly published JIS standards can be found on the website of the Japan Standards Association: [http://www.jsa.or.jp/default\\_english.asp](http://www.jsa.or.jp/default_english.asp).

## **NIST Notify U.S. Service**

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

## **Conformity Assessment**

Please see the [Product Certification](#) section below.

## **Product Certification**

With the revision of the Industrial Standardization Law in October 2005, the Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS) was renewed and a new scheme was implemented in September 2008. Under the new JIS mark scheme, product certification bodies accredited by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) conduct a series of tests to verify compliance of products with JIS and audit the quality management system of facilities at which the products are manufactured. Any products manufactured at a factory that successfully passes such an audit will be authorized to affix the JIS mark. Additional information on this process can be found on the JISC website: <http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/jis-mark/newjis-eng.html>.

## **Accreditation**

The Japan Accreditation System for Product Certification Bodies of JIS Mark (JASC) is an accreditation program defined by the Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS) Law, and operated by the JASC office in the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). JASC accredits product certification bodies in the private sector and allows these bodies to certify companies so that the companies may place the JIS Mark on their products. A list of Japanese and foreign organizations accredited by JASC as "JIS mark" certification bodies is available on the JISC

website at <http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/jis-mark/acc-insp-body.html>. This list provides contact information as well as the JIS fields of certification for these testing organizations. The two major non-governmental accreditation bodies in Japan are the Incorporated Administrative Agency (IAJapan – within the quasi-governmental National Institute of Technology and Evaluation) and the Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB). IAJapan operates several accreditation programs including the Japan National Laboratory Accreditation System (JNLA) and the Japan Calibration Service System (JCSS). IAJapan's website (<http://www.nite.go.jp/asse/iajapan/en/index.html>) provides lists of laboratories accredited under its programs and laboratories accredited by JAB can be found at <http://www.jab.or.jp/english/index.html>.

A limited number of testing laboratories in the U.S., not listed on the websites noted above, have also been designated by various Japanese government agencies to test and approve U.S. products for compliance with Japanese mandatory certification standards and laws. Products not covered by these arrangements must be tested and approved by Japanese testing labs before these products can be sold in Japan.

For conformity assessment bodies recognized by Japan for electrical appliances see: <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/denan/procedure/07.htm>

For other information on third-party conformity assessment for electrical products see: <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/denan/procedure/index.htm>

### **Publication of Technical Regulations**

Each Japanese ministry posts draft regulations for public comment on their respective websites. These draft regulations can also be found in a consolidated list, available in Japanese, on the e-Gov web portal: <http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public>. The website was designed to help facilitate public participation in Japan's regulatory process by improving the public's ability to find, view, and comment on regulatory actions.

It should be noted that although U.S. entities may submit comments on draft regulations, the amount of time given for submissions varies widely and all comments must be submitted in Japanese. To assist U.S. entities that wish to participate in the Japanese regulatory process, Commercial Service staff at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo prepares a weekly summary translation in English of public comment announcements by Japanese government agencies. For information on how to obtain this summary translation please contact the Commercial Section by email at: [Tokyo.Office.Box@trade.gov](mailto:Tokyo.Office.Box@trade.gov)

Finalized technical regulations and standards are published in Japan's national gazette known as the *Kanpō* (<http://kanpou.npb.go.jp>, Japanese only).

### **Labeling and Marking**

The "voluntary" Japan Industrial Standards (JIS) mark, administered by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), applies to nearly 600 different industrial products and consists of over 10,259 standards (as of March, 2011). Adherence to JIS is also an important determinant for companies competing on bids in the Japanese government procurement process. Products that comply with these standards will be given preferential treatment in procurement decisions under Japan's Industrial Standardization Law. JIS covers industrial and mineral products with the exception of: 1) medicines; 2) agricultural chemicals; 3) chemical

fertilizers; 4) silk yarn; and 5) foodstuffs, agricultural and forest products designated under the Law Concerning Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products. The Japan Agricultural Standards (JAS) is another "voluntary" but widely used product standard system administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). As of March, 2011, there were 214 JAS standards covering 66 products. JAS is comprised of five different category standards including general and specific, which are product-based standards. The other three categories are based on the manufacturing or distribution process, one example being organic production standards. The general category applies to beverages, processed foods, forest products, agricultural commodities, livestock products, oils and fats, products of the fishing industry, and processed goods made from agricultural, forestry, and fishing industry raw materials. Specific JAS apply to aged ham, aged sausage and aged bacon.

JAS certification is a complicated process requiring approval by a Registered (Overseas) Certified Body (ROCB). At this time there are only three approved ROCB for forest products and two for organic products located in the U.S. More information on the JAS labeling system can be found at the following Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) website: <http://www.maff.go.jp/e/jas/index.html>.

In September 2009, responsibility for all labeling issues in Japan, including food labeling, was officially transferred to the new Consumer Affairs Agency. More information on product labeling can be found on Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency website: <http://www.caa.go.jp/en/index.html>. There are 56 quality labeling standards under the JAS law. Standards for fresh foods, processed foods and genetically modified foods are available in English at: <http://www.maff.go.jp/e/jas/labeling/index.html>

Other quality labeling standards are available (in Japanese only) at: [http://www.maff.go.jp/j/jas/hyoji/kijun\\_itiran.html](http://www.maff.go.jp/j/jas/hyoji/kijun_itiran.html)

As noted above, Japanese laws requiring product certification and labeling are numerous. A good reference for additional information on these requirements is JETRO's *Handbooks for Industrial and Consumer Product Import Regulations* available at: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/regulations/>. This website also includes specifications, standards and testing methods for foodstuffs, implements, containers and packaging, toys and detergents.

For additional information see the section above on *Labeling and Marking Requirements* in this chapter.

## **Contacts**

Japan Industrial Standards Committee:  
Contact: Secretariat Office  
Tel: (81-3) 3501-9473  
E-mail: [jisc@meti.go.jp](mailto:jisc@meti.go.jp)  
Website: <http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/index.html>

Japan Standards Association:

Contact: Secretariat Office

Tel: (81-3) 3583-0462 [Publishing Services Division 1, for purchasing and viewing the JIS in English, etc.]

E-mail: please use the enquiry form at [https://www.jsa.or.jp/eng/form\\_mail\\_e.asp](https://www.jsa.or.jp/eng/form_mail_e.asp)

Website: [http://www.jsa.or.jp/default\\_english.asp](http://www.jsa.or.jp/default_english.asp)

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) on Standards and Regulations:

<http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/regulations>

National Metrology Institute of Japan:

<http://www.nmij.jp/english/>

Building Center of Japan:

<http://www.bcj.or.jp/en>

Telecommunication Technology Committee:

<http://www.ttc.or.jp/e/index.html>

Japan Cable Television Engineering Association: <http://www.catv.or.jp/jctea/english/index.html>

Association of Radio Industries and Businesses:

<http://www.arib.or.jp/english/index.html>

### **Conformity Assessment Bodies:**

Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB):

Contact: Customer Service, General Affairs Dept.

Fax: (81-3) 5475-2780

E-mail: please use the enquiry form at <http://www.jsa.or.jp/aboutus/query.asp>

Website: <http://www.jab.or.jp/english/index.html>

International Accreditation Japan:

Contact: Quality Manager

Tel: (81-3) 3481-1946

Fax: (81-3) 3481-1937

E-mail: [iajapan-qm@nite.go.jp](mailto:iajapan-qm@nite.go.jp)

Website: <http://www.iajapan.nite.go.jp/iajapan/en/index.html>

Foreign Registered Conformity Assessment Bodies in Japan:

<http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/denan/procedure/07.htm>

Japan Accreditation System for Product Certification Bodies:

<http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/index.html>

Japan National Institute of Technology and Evaluation:

<http://www.nite.go.jp/index-e.html>

Specified Measurement Laboratory Accreditation Scheme:

<http://www.iajapan.nite.go.jp/mlap/en/top.html>

Japan National Laboratory Accreditation System: <http://www.iajapan.nite.go.jp/inla/en/index.html>

Japan Calibration Service System:  
<http://www.iajapan.nite.go.jp/jcss/en/index.html>

Accreditation System of National Institute of Technology and Evaluation:  
<http://www.iajapan.nite.go.jp/asnite/en/index.html>

Third-party Conformity Assessment for Electrical Products in Japan:  
<http://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/denan/procedure/index.htm>

Japanese Draft Standards, Regulations and Public Comment:  
<http://search.e-gov.go.jp/servlet/Public>

Japan's National Gazette (*Kanpō*):  
<http://kanpou.npb.go.jp> (Japanese only)

For Japanese technical regulations notified to the WTO, sign up for the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) "Notify U.S." service at: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus>

Questions on standards related issues specific to Japan can be addressed to:

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Commercial Attaché

Commercial Section, U.S. Embassy Tokyo

Phone: + 81-3-3224-5070

Email: [Mark.Wildman@trade.gov](mailto:Mark.Wildman@trade.gov)

## **Trade Agreements**

As of August 2011, Japan had entered into economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with 10 countries: Brunei, Chile, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Singapore, Switzerland, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam and India. Also, an agreement between Japan and the Republic of Peru was reached in May 2011. In addition to bilateral agreements, Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have also entered into an agreement (April 2008) on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership. EPAs are currently being negotiated with the Republic of Korea and Australia. Additionally, Japan is negotiating an FTA with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. The Cabinet's "Basic Policy on Comprehensive Economic Partnerships" announced November 6, 2010, calls on the Japanese government to achieve the earliest possible conclusion of its FTA negotiations with Australia, the European Union, and the Republic of Korea. Under the Basic Policy, Japan has also initiated consultations with the nine member economies of the Trans-Pacific Partnership about possibly joining this multilateral free trade agreement. Additional information on Japan's trade agreements can be found on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/fta/index.html>  
For information on sector-specific agreements between the United States and Japan visit the Department of Commerce Market Access and Compliance Japan website:  
<http://www.mac.doc.gov/japan/sector-specific/sector-specific.htm>

Japan is a full member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). For more information on Japan and the WTO visit: [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/countries\\_e/japan\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/japan_e.htm)

## Web Resources

Japanese import clearance and customs procedures:  
Japanese Customs:

Japanese Ministry of Finance/Japan Customs  
<http://www.customs.go.jp/english/>

Customs Counselors System in Japan  
[http://www.customs.go.jp/zeikan/seido/telephone\\_e.htm](http://www.customs.go.jp/zeikan/seido/telephone_e.htm)

Japan Tariff Association  
<http://www.kanzei.or.jp/english>

U.S. export control procedures:  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)  
<http://www.bis.doc.gov>  
(for defense-related articles)  
U.S. Department of State

Office of Defense Trade Controls  
<http://www.pmdtc.state.gov>  
(for current U.S. embargo information)

U.S. Department of the Treasury  
Office of Foreign Assets Control  
<http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac>

Obtaining a temporary-entry *carnet*:  
United States Council for International Business  
Local Offices — <http://www.uscib.org>  
<http://www.atacarnet.com>

Standards (key organizations; see also “Standards Contacts” above):

Japan Industrial Standards Committee (JISC)

<http://www.jisc.go.jp/eng/index.html>  
International Accreditation Japan (IAJapan)

<http://www.nite.go.jp/asse/iajapan/en/index.html>  
Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB)

<http://www.jab.or.jp/english/index.html>

Public comment on Japanese government regulations:  
(for finalized technical regulations and standards)  
Japan National Gazette (*Kanpō*)

<http://kanpou.npb.go.jp> (Japanese only)  
Japanese Import Standards and Regulations:

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)  
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/market/regulations/index.html>