

Employment of Foreign Workers Q&A

Foreign Employees– Version Front



What should I do if my employer tells me to quit before the contract ends?



In general, an employer cannot cancel a contract before it ends without a valid reason.

If the contract has a fixed term, both the company and the worker must follow it until the end.

Only in cases of unavoidable circumstances, such as serious business difficulties or natural disasters, can the contract be ended early.

Just saying “the work has decreased” is not sufficient reason.

If the company cancels the contract early for its own reasons,

the worker may have the right to claim payment for the remaining contract period.



What if I want to quit before the contract ends?



In general, you must work until the end of the contract.

Workers cannot quit in the middle of the contract without a good reason.

However, if you have a serious reason (like illness or family problems), you may be allowed to quit.

Also, if the job is very different from what was promised, you can quit immediately.

If workers have no fixed contract period (permanent job), they can resign with 2 weeks’ notice.

▪ Important for visa holders:

- If you leave your job and do not work for over 3 months, your visa may be cancelled.
- When changing jobs, the new job must match your visa type (e.g. “Engineer,” “Skilled Labor,” etc.).
- Some visa types like Technical Intern or Specified Skilled Worker may have extra rules about quitting or changing jobs.



My salary was reduced after I took paid leave. Is that, OK?



No, it is not OK.

If you take paid leave, your salary should not be reduced.

Paid leave is a legal right for all workers in Japan.

Even if you take a day off with paid leave, you must still receive your full salary for that day.



My salary was reduced after being late 3 times. Is that, OK?



First, check your company rules (work regulations).

If the rules say that salary can be reduced as a penalty for being late, it may be allowed — but there is a legal limit to how much can be reduced.

Also, if your salary was reduced only for the time you were late, this is not a penalty. It is just a correction for the time you did not work.

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I was told “You are being laid off because of restructuring.” What should I do?



There are strict rules for firing workers because of restructuring (redundancy).

To be valid, all these four conditions must be met:

1. The company really needs to reduce workers.
2. The company tried other ways to avoid firing, like moving workers to other jobs.
3. The selection of who to fire was fair.
4. The company properly discussed the situation with you.

If these conditions are not met, the dismissal may be invalid.



I worked for many years, but I did not get retirement pay. Why?



Retirement pay is not always guaranteed.

By law, only companies that decide to give retirement pay must write the rules in their work regulations.

If the company does not have a retirement pay system, you may not receive it.

Check your company’s work rules or retirement pay rules first.

Also, if the company usually gave retirement pay before, you might have a right to get it.



What if my company goes bankrupt and I don’t get my salary or retirement pay?



Salary and retirement pay have priority to be paid before other debts.

But it is difficult to get money back without action.

First, check if the company has any assets (for example, by looking at company registration).

Then, if possible, talk to the company and try to make them pay you as soon as possible.



My company told me to work at a subsidiary. What does this mean?



There are two types:

1. Secondment (Shukkō)

You keep your job at your current company but work at another company.

If the work rules say you can be seconded, the company can order this.

The company must explain the conditions clearly so you are not treated unfairly.

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2. Transfer of Employment (Tenseki)

You leave your current company and
move completely to another company.

This can only happen if you agree to it.

