

Immigration Office

Aomori Branch Office
1-3-5 Nagashima, Aomori City,
Aomori Prefecture
Phone: 017-777-2939

Morioka Branch Office
1-9-15 Morioka-eki-nishidori,
Morioka City, Iwate Prefecture
Phone: 018-621-1206

Akita Branch Office
7-1-3, Sanno, Aikita-City,
Akita Prefecture
Phone: 018-895-5221

Sendai Regional Immigration Bureau
1-3-20 Corin, Miyagiono-ku,
Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture
Phone: 022-256-6073



35TH FIGHTER WING
OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE
TORII BUILDING, BLDG 656
MISAWA AIR BASE, JAPAN

SOFA STATUS

THIS BROCHURE INCLUDES:

- SOFA STATUS DEFINED
- PERSONS NOT QUALIFIED FOR SOFA STATUS
- ENTITLEMENTS
- CONVERSION TO SOFA STATUS
- HOW TO OBTAIN A SOFA CERTIFICATION LETTER
- SOFA STAMPS



Do you have additional questions? If so, contact the Misawa Air Base Legal Office and request to schedule a Legal Assistance Appointment.

35th Fighter Wing Contact Information:

Email: 35fw.ja@us.af.mil
DSN Phone: [315-226-4022](tel:315-226-4022)
DSN Fax: [315-226-2185](tel:315-226-2185)
Commercial Phone: [011-81-176-77-4022](tel:011-81-176-77-4022)



The information in this brochure is of a general nature and is not intended as a substitute for legal counsel.

SOFA STATUS DEFINED

SOFA status is not something that is granted or denied. It is based on belonging to one of the following categories:

- a. active duty service members in Japan, regardless of purpose or length of stay
- b. U.S. civilians who are in the employ of, serving with, or accompanying the military in Japan
- c. "dependents" of categories (a) and (b): spouse (same-sex or opposite-sex spouse) children, step-children, and adopted children under 21 children, step-children, and adopted children over 21 (i.e., no maximum age) if dependent on the sponsor for over half their support parents and parent-in-law if dependent on the sponsor for over half their support and not ordinarily resident in Japan

"dependent" for purposes of the SOFA is different than "dependent" for purposes of DoD regulations:

- being a SOFA "dependent" does not require that the person be "command sponsored"
- being a SOFA "dependent" does not require that the person have an "area clearance"
- being a SOFA "dependent" does not require DEERS eligibility

PERSONS NOT QUALIFIED FOR SOFA STATUS:

- retirees unless they fall into either category (a), (b), or (c) above
- legal wards and foster children even if court-appointed
- parents or parents-in-law if ordinarily resident in Japan
- grandparents, regardless of support
- grandchildren, regardless of support
- family members of Art. XIV contractors
- non-DoD federal employees
- members of foreign armed forces
- resident of Japan, except dependent(s)

SOFA status gives an individual:

- visa exemption
- criminal jurisdiction procedures IAW Article XVII of the SOFA

SOFA status, by itself, does not entitle an individual to:

- USFJ driver's license (Contact PMO's Pass and Registration)
- USFJ vehicle registration (Contact PMO's Pass and Registration)
- base access or use of base facilities
- exchange, commissary, or other similar benefits
- TRICARE enrollment
- DoD ID card
- military family housing
- OHA
- COLA
- funded travel
- COLA
- funded travel

CONVERTING TO SOFA STATUS

To convert from a tourist/work/education/fiancé visa to a SOFA visa as a "dependent," you must bring the following to the local Immigration Office:

- Passport
- Application of Eligibility under the Status of Forces Agreement - GOJ Form No. 6 - (See USFJI 36-2611, Attachment 5)
- Confirmation of Eligibility under Status of Forces Agreement - USFJ Form 8EJ - (See USFJI 36-2611, Attachment 3)
- Status of Forces Agreement Certification Letter - written statement from the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate certifying the family relationship with a member of the U.S. Armed Forces or Civilian Component

HOW TO OBTAIN A SOFA CERTIFICATION LETTER?

Please note that this is only required for member's who have acquired dependents while stationed at Misawa Air Base that do not appear on their Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders.

Step 1:

Gather the following required items and save the documents as follows:

- DoD ID Card: "Your Last Name_CAC Card."
- Military Orders: "Your Last Name_Military Orders."
- Passport: "Your Last Name_Spouse Passport."
- Marriage Certificate: "Your Last Name_Marriage Certificate."
 - Please include the translations if the marriage certificate is not in English

Step 2:

E-mail all documents to 35 FW/JA org box at 35fw.ja@us.af.mil. For the subject of this email, please label it "SOFA Certification Letter Request - Rank Last Name (UNIT)."

Step 3:

The SOFA Certification Letter will be emailed to the sponsor within 5 duty days of our office receiving it.

SOFA STAMP

SOFA Stamps are provided at the airport/rotator terminal upon arrival to Misawa to U.S. Armed Forces members on travel orders.

For dependents not on the services member's orders, they must complete the visa conversion process above to obtain a SOFA stamp. Once the Immigration Office has verified your paperwork and voided out the previous visa used to enter Japan, please visit the 35 SFS Pass and Registration office to obtain your stamp.