SmartSuite

Framework / Privacy / Global Privacy Regulations

# Act on the Protection of Personal Information (APPI), Act No. 57 of 2003, as amended

The APPI (Act No. 57 of 2003) is Japan's data protection law, enforced by the PPC, with breach reporting, transfer rules and a 2026 amendment adding surcharges.




## What it is

The Act on the Protection of Personal Information (APPI, Act No. 57 of 2003) is Japan's national data protection law. The National Diet enacted it on 30 May 2003 and it has been fully in force since 2005; it binds every business that uses a personal information database for business (Article 16(2)), applies to foreign businesses that supply goods or services to people in Japan (Article 171), and is enforced by the Personal Information Protection Commission (PPC). Since the 2021 amendment it also governs public bodies, and the current text has been fully in force since 1 April 2023.

## At a glance

PUBLISHER
National Diet of Japan (enacting body); enforced by the Personal Information Protection Commission (PPC)

TYPE
Regulation

VERSION
Act No. 57 of 2003 as amended through Act No. 37 of 2021 (current text in force April 1, 2023); amending Act promulgated July 17, 2026, not yet in force

EFFECTIVE
Fully enforced 2005; current amended text in force April 1, 2023; 2026 amendments phased in from 2027 to 2028 at the latest

DOMAIN
Privacy

FAMILY
Global Privacy Regulations

REGION
Japan

ADOPTION MODEL
Regulatory Compliance

IMPLEMENTATION COMPLEXITY
High

Source: ppc.go.jp/en/legal/

## Why it matters

- **Consent and purpose control** Articles 17 and 18 require a specified purpose of use and consent before handling data beyond it; Article 20(2) requires consent to acquire sensitive personal information.
- **A fixed breach clock** Article 26 and the PPC rules require a report to the PPC for defined events: a preliminary report within 3 to 5 days of discovery and a final report within 30 days, or 60 days if an unlawful purpose is suspected.
- **Controls on third-party and foreign transfers** Articles 27 to 30 require consent or a statutory exception for third-party provision, records of provision, and extra information or equivalent measures for transfers abroad (Article 28).
- **Data subject rights** Articles 33 to 35 let individuals request disclosure, correction and the cessation of use or deletion of personal data a business holds.


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## How SmartSuite supports APPI

### Purpose of Use Register

Record each purpose specified under Article 17, the data it covers, the notice given under Article 21 and any change made within the reasonably linked range.

### Personal Data Inventory and Sensitive Data Flags

Map personal data, systems and owners, and flag sensitive personal information that needs consent under Article 20(2).

### Third-Party and Foreign Provision Log

Log each provision under Articles 27 and 28 with the consent or exception relied on, the recipient country and the Article 29 and 30 records.

### Individual Request Handling

Track disclosure, correction and cessation requests under Articles 33 to 35 with the handling steps, deadlines and responses.

### Breach Reporting Tracker

Run the Article 26 incident record with discovery date, the 3 to 5 day preliminary and 30 or 60 day final report deadlines, and notice to individuals.

### Entrusted Processor Oversight

Track entrusted processors in Third Party Risk Management with the Article 25 supervision, contract terms and review evidence.

## Common framework mappings

APEC PF | CCPA/CPRA | GDPR | ISO 27701 | NIST Privacy Framework v1.0 | PIPEDA

## Official resources

### APPI - Act on the Protection of Personal Information

Official English translation of Japan's APPI regulation, detailing data protection requirements.

ppc.go.jp/files/pdf/APPI_english.pdf

### APPI Guidelines

Provides comprehensive guidance on the interpretation and application of APPI provisions.

ppc.go.jp/en/legal

## Frequently asked questions

### What is the APPI and who enforces it?

The Act on the Protection of Personal Information (Act No. 57 of 2003) is Japan's general data protection law. It applies to businesses that use a personal information database for business (Article 16(2)) and to public bodies, and the Personal Information Protection Commission supervises it through reports, inspections, guidance, recommendations and orders (Articles 146 to 148).

### When must a data breach be reported under the APPI?

Article 26 requires a report to the PPC for events the rules prescribe: leaks involving sensitive personal information, risk of financial loss, suspected unlawful purpose such as an attack, or more than 1,000 data subjects. The PPC asks for a preliminary report within 3 to 5 days of discovery and a final report within 30 days, or 60 days where an unlawful purpose is suspected. The individual must also be notified.

### What are the rules for sending personal data to a third party or abroad?

Article 27(1) requires the person's prior consent unless an exception applies, with an opt-out route that needs advance notice and a filing with the PPC (Article 27(2)). For a recipient in a foreign country, Article 28 requires consent after the person is given information about that country's system, unless the country is one the PPC has recognized as equivalent or the recipient has a system meeting PPC standards for equivalent measures. Records of provision are kept under Articles 29 and 30.

### Does the APPI apply to companies outside Japan?

Yes. Article 171 applies the Act where a business handles information that identifies a person in Japan, abroad, in connection with supplying goods or services to that person. The PPC can also share information with foreign enforcement authorities under Article 172.


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### What did the 2026 amendment change?

The Act amending the APPI, passed by the Diet on 10 July 2026 and promulgated on 17 July 2026, introduces administrative surcharges (Articles 148-3 to 148-17), higher criminal penalties, a consent exemption for statistics including AI development, rules for children under 16 and for facial feature data, and a relaxed duty to notify individuals of low-risk breaches. Its penal provisions take effect six months after promulgation and the rest by Cabinet Order within two years.

License included / downloadable: Yes The APPI is Japanese national legislation. The PPC and the Ministry of Justice publish official English translations free of charge for reference only; only the Japanese text has legal effect. The platform links to the PPC's page.

Full framework page and mappings: smartsuite.com/frameworks/japan-act-on-the-protection-of-personal-information-appi