

21. Cameras and Accessories

1. Definition of Category

Cameras and camera accessories, except those items designed for medical or other specialized use. It also does not include film or slide projectors, video cameras and film developing or printing equipment.

HS Numbers	Commodity
9006.40-000	Instant print cameras
9006.51-000, .52-010, -020, -090,	
.53-100, -900, .59-000	SLRs (single lens reflex cameras) and compact cameras
9002.11-010	Lenses
9002.20-000	Filters
9027.40-000	Exposure meters
9006.61-000, 62-000, 69-000, 91-000.99-000	Camera parts and accessories

2. Import Trends

(1) Recent Trends in Camera & Accessory Imports

Japan is one of the world's leading producers of cameras, and it exports many times more cameras than it imports, on both a volume and value basis. However, rising wages in Japan have led Japanese makers to shift more of their production sites to other Asian nations. These cameras are produced abroad and re-imported into Japan. While imports from other Asian nations have been increasing in volume, camera imports have been declining on a value basis rather dramatically. Total imports of cameras and camera accessories (including parts and accessories) rose a slight 1.9% from a year earlier, to \mathbb{\xi}89.9 billion.

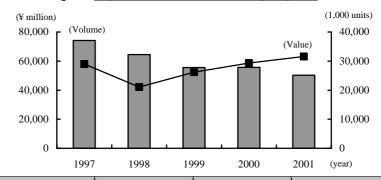


Fig. 1 Japan's camera & accessory imports

	19	97	1998		19	1999		2000		01
	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value
Instant print cameras	916	5,805	811	5,694	2,545	7,942	2,254	6,972	1,560	6,567
SLRs and compact cameras	28,099	68,408	20,282	58,783	23,646	47,610	27,086	48,737	30,014	43,759
Camera total (1,000 units)	29,015	74,213	21,093	64,477	26,191	55,552	29,339	55,709	31,574	50,326
Exposure meters	1	52	56	26	1	20	3	20	1	22
Other camera parts and accessories	16,299	3,105	26,325	5,555	28,069	5,885	28,683	5,099	24,128	5,172
Parts & accessories (sub-total) 1,000 units	16,301	3,158	26,380	5,581	28,070	5,905	28,686	5,119	24,128	5,194
Lenses	217	7,753	229	7,361	188	5,447	305	7,096	389	10,791
Filters	439	2,493	392	3,741	261	1,956	206	1,958	211	2,366
Other camera parts and accessories	1,982	23,917	2,006	19,174	2,190	18,606	2,347	18,424	2,321	21,272
Parts & accessories (sub-total) tons	2,637	34,163	2,627	30,275	2,639	26,009	2,858	27,478	2,921	34,429
TOTAL	-	111,534	-	100,333	-	87,466	-	88,306	-	89,948

Value unit: ¥ million Source: Japan Exports and Imports

Imports of still cameras have risen on a volume basis for three straight years, topping the 30 million unit mark for the first time in 2001. But, since most common variety in terms of volume consists of disposable cameras (with built-in lenses and film), total import value showed 10.2% decrease from the year before to \(\frac{4}{3}.8\) billion. Japanese makers have shifted almost all of their production sites on disposable cameras and inexpensive compact cameras. Imports of SLR (single lens reflex) cameras also grew to 542,000 units (up 10.2% from the year before), along with the start of full-scale offshore production by Japanese camera makers.

Total imports of camera parts and accessories rose steadily. The main reason was the dramatic increase in the use of parts produced at Japanese-owned offshore facilities, which are imported into Japan for assembly into finished products. Imports of flashes and flash accessories turned up again after hitting bottom in 1993.

(2) Imports by Place of Origin

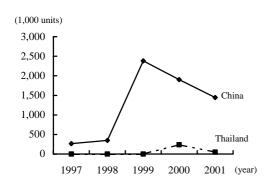
1) Instant print cameras

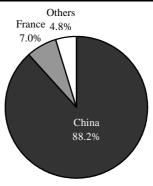
Up until 1997, almost all imports of instant print cameras came from the United Kingdom and the United States. These were probably from the American and British production facilities of Polaroid. Imports of instant print cameras from China began growing in the late 1998 when Fuji Photo Film began operating production facilities in China. In 2001 China accounted for 92.5% on a volume basis, and 88.2% on value basis. But, the proliferation of inexpensive digital cameras and camera-equipped mobile telephones has cut into demand for instant cameras, and import volume is declining.

Fig. 2 Principal exporters of instant print cameras to Japan

Trends in import volume by leading exporters

Shares of instant print camera imports in 2001 (value basis)





	1997	1998	1999	20	00		20	2001			
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Value	Vol	ume	Va	lue		
China	267	346	2,382	1,904	5,534	1,443	92.5%	5,795	88.2%		
Thailand	-	-	-	236	173	50	3.2%	38	0.6%		
U.S.A.	13	127	1	1	59	23	1.5%	30	0.5%		
U.K.	528	283	95	76	582	20	1.3%	133	2.0%		
R. Korea	1	1	23	28	5	14	0.9%	2	0.0%		
Others	107	55	44	9	620	10	0.7%	569	8.7%		
TOTAL	916	811	2,545	2,254	6,972	1,560	100.0%	6,567	100.0%		
(EU)	560	290	112	79	1,050	20	1.3%	590	9.0%		

Units: 1,000 units, ¥ million

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

2) Still cameras

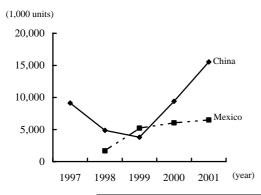
Imports of still camera have risen steadily due to the shift of production facilities by major Japanese camera makers to China and other countries. The most common variety in terms of volume consists of disposable cameras (film-type cameras with lenses). Imports of 35 mm disposable cameras from China more than doubled in 2001, giving China the lead in import share (with 55.0%). In contrast, imports from the United States have withered over the last five years, tumbling from 9.46 million units to just 1.99 million units. Mexico is the leading exporter of 24 mm disposable cameras (50.6%).

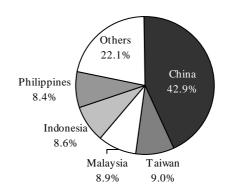
Imports of the high-end SLR cameras from Thailand (35.8%) increased significantly, followed by Taiwan (28.7%) and Malaysia (16.8%). In the past, imports from Germany and Sweden consisted of high unit priced luxury single reflex lens cameras. But, in 2001, EU nations together accounted for just 3.8% of total still camera imports even on a value basis.

Fig. 3 Principal exporters of still cameras to Japan

Trends in import volume by leading exporters

Shares of still camera imports in 2001 (value basis)





	1997	1998	1999	2000 2001			01		
	Volume	Volume	Volume	Volume	Value	Vol	ume	Va	lue
China	9,126	4,858	3,796	9,390	20,925	15,532	51.7%	18,792	42.9%
Mexico	0	1,671	5,207	6,033	3,720	6,485	21.6%	1,994	4.6%
R. Korea	995	869	1,432	2,195	709	2,358	7.9%	578	1.3%
U.S.A.	9,491	6,088	5,989	4,607	2,606	2,230	7.4%	1,032	2.4%
Hong Kong	1,186	435	1,032	482	451	915	3.0%	144	0.3%
Others	7,302	6,361	6,190	4,378	20,325	2,494	8.3%	21,219	48.5%
TOTAL	28,099	20,282	23,646	27,086	48,737	30,014	100.0%	43,759	100.0%
(EU)	1,739	3,509	4,041	2,358	1,886	609	2.0%	1,681	3.8%

Units: 1,000 units, ¥ million

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

Fig. 4 Leading exporters of camera bodies to Japan by category (2001)

		First			Second			
	Total	Country	Share	Yearly change	Country	Share	Yearly change	
Single lens reflex cameras	542	Thailand	35.8%	292.9	Taiwan	28.7%	63.6	
24mm disposable cameras	2,732	Mexico	50.6%	118.0	Hong Kong	28.8%	*	
24mm APS cameras	735	Indonesia	41.4%	81.1	China	37.2%	57.0	
Other compact cameras	313	R. Korea	86.9%	*	China	12.3%	39.7	
35mm disposable cameras	21.361	China	55.0%	234.9	Mexico	23.9%	105.0	
35mm compact cameras	4,286	China	77.6%	90.4	Indonesia	7.3%	130.7	
Other cameras	44	China	49.8%	44.0	Taiwan	34.1%	318.8	

Volume unit: 1,000 units

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

3) Camera parts and accessories

Imports of camera parts and accessories, as well as camera bodies, are mostly from other parts of Asia. Starting in the early 1990s, imports from Taiwan rose sharply. Since then, Thailand, China and Malaysia joined Taiwan, increasing their exports to Japan. Now almost all parts production, excluding filters from Taiwan, and exposure meters from Germany, shifted to factories in China. Behind the growth in imports of camera parts and accessories, particularly for SLRs, Japanese camera manufacturers have been importing parts from offshore production facilities in Asia for assembly into final products back in Japan.

Fig. 5 Leading exporters of parts/accessories to Japan by category (2001)

	Volume				Value				
	Total	First	Share	Yearly change	Total	First	Share	Yearly change	
Lens	389	China	32.4%	135.5	10,791	China	38.3%	177.6	
Filter	211	Taiwan	82.8%	115.2	2,366	U.S.A.	52.2%	130.1	
Exposure meter	1	Germany	78.0%	31.6	22	Germany	36.3%	99.5	
Parts & accessories (unit basis)	24,128	China	69.3%	89.2	5,172	China	58.3%	93.0	
Parts & accessories (weight basis)	2,321	China	52.3%	104.6	21,272	Thailand	25.7%	137.9	

Volume units: 1,000 units, tons Value unit : ¥ million

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

(3) Imports' Market Share in Japan

The increased internationalization of camera manufacturing has resulted in a dramatic increase in imports of camera parts and components. Nearly 90% of all cameras produced in Japan from these components are then exported to the rest of the world. It is difficult to calculate the share of imports in the Japanese market. Statistics on domestic shipments of cameras and interchangeable lenses are shown below for the past three years. Digital still camera shipments have soared from 1.50 million to 4.83 million units, putting digital cameras clearly ahead of conventional still cameras.

Imports' share in SLR cameras are estimated at 43.1% of the market. Nevertheless, most imports consist of products made at offshore facilities owned by Japanese camera makers. European and American brand label imports have only a very small presence in the market. In contrast, instant cameras, 110 cameras and disposable cameras almost rely on imports. Japanese-made products dominate the exposure meter market. Imports have only a tiny share of this market. not quite 5% of the market in lenses and filters.

Fig. 6 Trends in domestic shipments of camera bodies (reference)

	1999	2000	2001
Single lens reflex cameras	801	716	555
Compact cameras	3,357	2,848	2,448
Medium/Large cameras	25	16	15
Still cameras total	4,182	3,580	3,018
Digital still cameras	1,499	2,949	4,831
Cameras Total	5,681	6,529	7,850
Interchangeable lenses for camera	1,431	1,203	1,174

Unit: 1,000 units

Source: Japan Camera Industry Association

3. Key Considerations related to Importing

(1) Regulations and Procedural Requirements at the Time of Importation

In general, there are no legal restrictions on imports of cameras and accessories. However, electronic flash apparatuses are subject to provisions of the Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law. Importers must file a notification of business commencement by each type classification with the Director-General of the competent Bureau of Economic, Trade and Industry (or with Minister of Economic, Trade and Industry in case of multiple business sites) within 30 days of commencing import operations. Importers are also required to prepare and maintain self-testing records.

(2) Regulations and Procedural Requirements at the Time of Sale

Electronic flash apparatuses are subject to provisions of the Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law and the Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations. In addition, containers and packaging may be subject to provisions of the Containers and Packaging Recycling Law and the Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources. For more detailed information about the subject, scope, labeling method, etc., please consult the competent government agencies listed below.

1) Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law

Electronic flash apparatuses are subject to provisions of the Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law as non-specific electrical appliances. Manufacturers or importers must confirm on their own that their products are compliant with technical standards, and must display required label items and PS mark on the product. (see 4. Labeling)

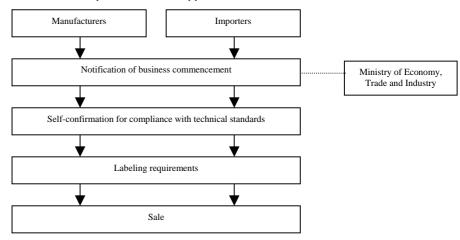
Under the revised Law in 1999, the manufacturer or importer shall undertake in-house testing, and be obligated to conform to technical standards through self-confirmation. Any products that are not compliant with the technical standards are subject to improvement orders or are prevented from displaying particular labels. When deemed necessary, products with a high level of danger or trouble shall be imposed to the violation of the order. (see Fig. 7)

2) Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations

The camera industry has voluntarily adopted labeling guideline in order to assure consumer product choice availability and preserve fair competition, based on the Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations. (see 4. Labeling)

Fig. 7 Procedures required under the Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law

<Non-specific electrical appliance>



(3) Competent Agencies

 Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law Product Safety Division, Consumer Affairs Department, Commerce and Information Policy Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

TEL: 03-3501-1511

http://www.meti.go.jp

Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations (Fair Competition Code)
Consumer Related Trade Division, Trade Practices Department, Fair Trade Commission of Japan

TEL: 03-3581-5471

http://www.jftc.go.jp

 Containers and Packaging Recycling Law / Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources Recycling Promotion Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

TEL: 03-3501-1511

http://www.meti.go.jp

Recycling Promotion Division, Waste Management and Recycling Department, Ministry of the Environment

TEL: 03-3581-3351 http://www.env.go.jp

4. Labeling

(1) Legally Required Labeling

1) Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law

Electronic flash apparatuses must be labeled with rated voltage, current, frequency, name of the manufacturer, and PSE mark.

PSE Mark (non-specific electrical appliances)



2) Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources

When paper or plastic is used as a packaging material for wrapping of individual product items, or for labels, tags, external packaging or elsewhere, a material identifier mark must be displayed with information where the material is used.

< Example >





External packaging

Tag

(2) Voluntary Labeling based on Provisions of Law

There is no voluntary labeling based on provisions of law for cameras and accessories.

(3) Voluntary Industry Labeling

1) Fair Competition Code under the Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations

The camera industry voluntarily established the Fair Competition Code under the Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations. The Code set down rules for labeling and other representation in stores and on circulars.

5. Taxes

(1) Customs Duties

Customs duties on cameras and accessories are all free.

Fig. 8 Customs duties on cameras and accessories

HS N	fo.	Description	Rate of Duty (%)					
IIS IV	0.	Description	General	WTO	Preferential	Temporary		
9006.40		Instant print cameras	Free	(Free)				
9006.51		Other cameras with a through-the lens view-finder	Free	(Free)				
9006.52		Other cameras, for roll film of a width lens than 35 mm						
	-010	For roll film of a width 24mm, without a function of exchanging film	Free	(Free)				
	-020	For other roll film of a width 24mm	Free	(Free)				
	-090	For roll film of a width lens than 35 mm	Free	(Free)				
9006.53		Other, for roll film of a width of 35 mm						
	-010	Without a function of exchanging film	Free	(Free)				
	-090	Other	Free	(Free)				
9006.59		Other cameras	Free	(Free)				
9002.11.0	010	Lenses for cameras	Free	(Free)				
9002.20		Filters	Free	(Free)				
9027.40		Exposure meters	Free	(Free)				
9006		Photographic apparatus						
61		Discharge lamp (electronic) flashlight apparatus	Free	(Free)				
62		Flashbulbs, flashcubes and the like	Free	(Free)				
69		Other flashlight	Free	(Free)				
91		Parts and accessories for cameras	Free	(Free)				
90		Other parts and accessories for cameras	Free	(Free)				

Note: Refer to "Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan" (published by Japan Tariff Association) etc. for interpretation of tariff table.

(2) Consumption Tax

CIF x 5%

6. Product Characteristics

1) Instant print cameras

Instant print cameras make use of special film that develops very quickly, allowing the photographer to view the photograph shortly after taking it. Polaroid Corporation, which is head quartered in the United States, exports a substantial quantity of instant print cameras to Japan, and its cameras are quite popular. Currently the only manufacturer producing instant print cameras in Japan is Fuji Photo, and Polaroid has the bulk of the Japanese market. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that Polaroid owns a number of patent on instant print camera manufacturing processes, which makes it difficult for other manufacturers to enter this market Polaroid offers a diverse product line of instant print cameras designed to meet diverse consumer needs, ranging from inexpensive general use models to high-performance professional grade models.

2) SLR cameras and compact cameras

Single lens reflex cameras offer users choices of interchangeable lenses and a high level of photographic imaging technology. Compact cameras, on the other hand are smaller, lighter in weight and relatively easy to use. European imports have long been popular in Japan with professional and serious amateur photographers. The German brand Leica enjoys long-standing high brand awareness, and the continuity of its styling has helped confer high status among avid photographers. The Swedish brand Hasselblad is a favorite among professionals who do studio photography with medium-size film. Recent model changes have helped increase of Hasselblad's popularity in recent years. Most European cameras are high-performance models priced in the ¥400,000 -500,000 range. The German brand Minox, which offers some models priced in the more affordable ¥40,000 price range, has its own group of supporters. European cameras tend to be larger and heavier, and few are classified in the category of compact cameras.

Imports from other Asian countries/areas primarily consist of offshore production by Japanese camera makers or OEM production for these makers. Some discount shops and supermarkets sell inexpensive plastic-body imports from Hong Kong or Taiwan camera makers. However, industry sources say that other Asian brand names have only a very small share of the Japanese market.

Compact cameras have a shorter product life cycle than high-performance SLRs. The emergence of inexpensive disposable cameras with built-in lenses and film has intensified competition the lower end of the market.

The technical specifications for the Advanced Photo System (APS) were developed jointly by the world's leading camera manufacturers when demand for high-end single-lens-reflex cameras suffered as penetration increased and demand shifted to less expensive compact cameras. The industry hoped the new system could return the single-lens-reflex camera to its former prosperity. Functionally, the main differences with conventional cameras are its use of film cartridges, the addition of an index print, and the ability to write magnetic data onto the film. Although sales were cool initially because of insufficient publicity, the camera has become popular among female consumers because of its small size, fashionable status, and easy-to-load film.

3) Camera parts & accessories

Japanese brand cameras produced offshore or by OEM producers often come with lens covers and camera cases produced in the same countries. A substantial portion of tripods is imported from elsewhere in Asia, usually from Japanese-owned facilities or OEM producers for Japanese makers. Many accessory items can be used with a wide range of camera equipment. Purchasers of German or Swedish brands of cameras are increasingly buying flash equipment along with their cameras. In most cases lenses will fit only one particular brand of camera, since camera makers generally use incompatible mounting. Because of this, most imported lenses consist of offshore production by or OEM production for Japanese camera makers. European-made lenses typically are incompatible with the mountings of Japanese brand cameras, and so are mostly used by European brand camera owners. There is little difference in terms of performance or features between Japanese and imported exposure meters. However, an increasing portion of Japanese exposure meters is based on digital technology, while most imports still utilize analog technology.

4) Digital still cameras

Digital still cameras, which record images on a magnetic media instead of on light-sensitive film, are becoming increasingly popular. Because they use CCDs, which consist of a matrix of light-receiving elements for image recording, they have yet to provide resolution on a par with traditional silver-halide film technology and are thus not suited to professional use. However, the ability to download photographs into a personal computer and edit them freely makes them popular for use in creating Internet home pages, which do not demand high resolution. Some high-end digital cameras are now even suited to the demands of professional photographers.

Traditional camera manufacturers, taking note of the potential growth of this sector, have been aggressive participants in the market. The digital camera market has become the province not only for camera makers but also for a number of electronic equipment makers. Digital cameras have more features, are lower in price, and work better with PCs than ever before. Digital still camera shipments have increased rapidly in recent years, putting digital cameras clearly ahead of conventional still cameras.

7. Domestic Distribution System and Business Practices

(1) Domestic Market Conditions

Thanks to rapid increase of digital still cameras, the Japanese camera market becomes very active. Many of makers continue to announce new models with higher performance and more affordable prices. On the other hand, still camera market is a mature market with intense competition. With the exception of products oriented toward professionals and serious amateurs, camera makers find that the only way to increase sales or stimulate replacement sales is to develop new camera models.

1) Instant print cameras

As stated previously, Polaroid enjoys a substantial lead over Fuji Photo, which is the only maker producing instant print camera in Japan. Although, there is a demand for instant print cameras for proofing and other test purposes, competition with inexpensive digital camera has cut into demand for instant print cameras.

2) SLR cameras and compact cameras

The SLR and compact camera market is fully mature and highly competitive, as the average Japanese household owns at least one camera, and sometimes more. The improvement in ease of use helped expand a market that was already mature.

The expansion did not last long, and soon the market reached the saturation point. Stiffer competition gave consumers more and more features and lower and lower costs. However except for a small number of professionals and serious amateur photographers, few consumers purchased more than a single camera. Most sales in the market are replacement sales, and there is little prospect for significant overall market expansion. Increased sales of digital cameras have hindered growth in the market for SLRs and compact cameras.

3) Camera parts & accessories

There really is no distinct market for camera cases and other accessory items as such. In most cases consumers purchase accessories at the same time they purchase their cameras. The exposure meter market is virtually monopolized by two Japanese manufacturers, mainly because most consumers have purely personal preferences for certain features of products from one company or the other.

4) Digital cameras

Increasingly popular high-end digital cameras now feature 3 million megapixels or more, along with 3X zoom, thus offering image quality and performance comparable to conventional still cameras. At the same time, smaller and lighter models with a more limited feature set and much lower prices are selling well to first-time users and to users who want a second camera. The market is very active, and makers continue to announce new models. The Japan Camera Industry Association projects domestic shipments of over 6.0 million units for 2002.

(2) Distribution Channels

As shown in the following figure, cameras are distributed either direct from manufacturers through affiliated sales companies, or through wholesalers. Japanese brand label imports produced offshore or by foreign OEM makers are distributed in the same manner as cameras made in Japan. Foreign brand labels are distributed through trading companies or authorized dealer agents. Discount camera shops have come to play a major role in the camera market today with their large and varied product lines that cater to diverse consumer needs. Other camera specialty stores are generally unable to compete with discount shops in terms of discount margins or breadth of product lines. Because of this the number of camera retailers is actually declining, especially in the Tokyo area. Camera specialty shops increasingly find it necessary to diversify into photo finishing and portraiture in order to survive.

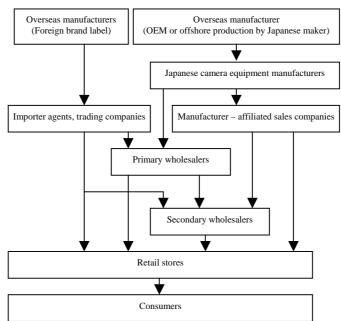


Fig. 9 <u>Distribution channels for cameras & accessories</u>

(3) Key Considerations for entering the Japanese Market

The Japanese camera industry already holds a leadership position in the world camera market, and the Japanese market is at or near the saturation point. Prospective importers would have to be able to offer a highly distinctive product to have any chance at success.

8. After-Sales Service

In almost all cases, repair service and other types of after sales service are handled by the retail outlet or by the service center listed on the warranty statement. Most camera equipment manufacturers and importer agents have in-house service operations to deal with repairs. Some cameras are covered by international warranties that provide for after sales service by Japanese dealers even when purchased abroad. However, "parallel imported" cameras or Japanese-brand cameras purchased in other countries may not come with warranties that are valid in Japan, and thus may be ineligible for warranty repair service. Repairs on these items can sometimes be quite costly.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has issued minimum warranty period guidelines for repair parts. For basic cameras the period is three years, for mid-range equipment the period is seven years, and for high-performance equipment the period is ten years.

9. Related Product Categories

Photographic film is one of the main related product categories, and film is not subject to any type of import restrictions. Electrically powered video cameras may also be freely imported into Japan. However, projectors, over-head projectors, internally powered video cameras and photographic enlargers are subject to provisions of the Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law.

Special-use cameras are subject to differing regulatory environments depending on their purpose. For instance, the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law as a form of medical equipment regulates medical cameras.

10. Direct Imports by Individuals

There are no legal restrictions on direct imports of cameras and accessories by individuals. However, individual importers would be well advised to find out ahead of time whether they can receive after-sales service from the manufacturer or authorized import agent for equipment purchased outside authorized sales channels.

11. Related Organizations

Japan Camera Industry Association
Japan Photo and Video Accessory Association
TEL: 03-5276-3891 http://www.photo-jcia.gr.jp
http://www5.mediagalaxy.co.jp/jpv/

• Japan Optical Industry Association TEL: 03-3431-7073