

1. Definition of Category

Mountaineering and camping equipment (this is a very broad category that encompasses products principally used for mountaineering and camping activities, but does not include campers or recreational vehicles).

HS Numbers	Commodity
6306.21, 22, 29	Tents

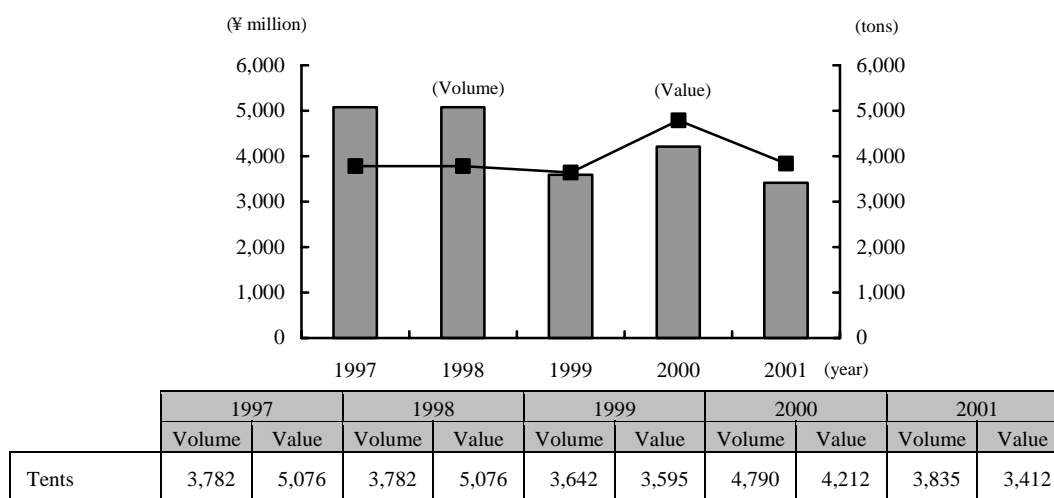
Note: This category encompasses different types of items such as rucksacks (chapter 42 of Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan), apparel (chapter 61), tents (chapter 63), footwear (chapter 64), and cooking appliance (chapter 73). This list of HS numbers includes many products not treated in this guidebook, so statistics and graph below treat only the data of tents.

2. Import Trends

(1) Recent Trends in Mountaineering and Camping Equipment Imports

The category of mountaineering and camping equipment encompasses items from a broad range of other product categories, including sporting goods, general merchandise, apparel and consumer durable goods. No single category exists in import statistics to identify these products together, which makes it difficult to assess overall trends in this area. Looking just at tents, however, until 1996, imports rose sharply both in terms of volume and value. However, in 1997 sharply decreased and since then stayed at same level. Although the slide in imports once came to a halt in 2000, total value of tents posted again a decline of 19.9% to ¥3.4 billion in 2001. On a volume basis, the imports also decreased to 3,835 tons, with a decline of 19.0% from the previous year.

Fig. 1 Japan's tent imports



Units: tons, ¥ million

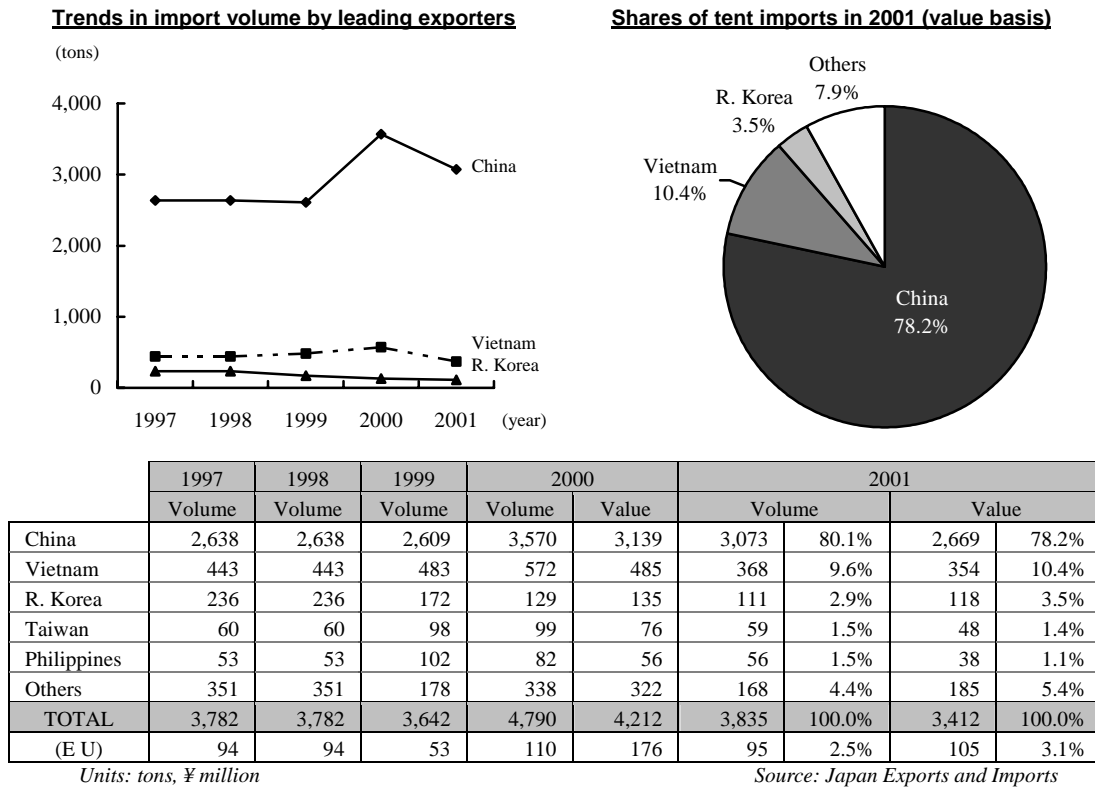
Source: Japan Exports and Imports

(2) Imports by Place of Origin

A breakdown of the imports of tents by supplier shows that up until around 1988, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan monopolized imports. But China boosted its import share on a volume basis in the 1990s, taking advantage of its price competitiveness, and it now ranks as the leading exporter of tents to Japan. In 2001 China held an 80.1% import share on a volume basis and a 78.2% share on a value basis, putting it far ahead of all other exporter nations. Second in the rankings was Vietnam, aided by its low-priced merchandise. However, no nation was able to sustain previous-year export levels in 2001.

Other types of mountaineering and camping equipment on the market, including portable cooking stoves, lamps and ice chests feature imports from countries such as the United States, France, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Industry sources indicate that there are many imports of barbecue grills, tables, chairs and sleeping bags from other Asian countries, much of which consists of OEM production for Japanese manufacturers.

Fig. 2 Principal exporters of tents to Japan



(3) Imports' Market Share in Japan

Imports' share in the Japanese market varies by product category and price range. For example, industry sources say that imports account for 90% of all portable cooking stove sales, compared to 70% for tents and only 20% for sleeping bags. Overall, industry observers believe that imports command an estimated more than 50% share of the Japanese mountaineering and camping equipment market, calculating based on retail prices of imported products after multiplying the distribution margins in Japan.

3. Key Considerations related to Importing

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

Gas containers for outdoor use gas ranges must be accompanied with test results indicating that they are not subject to provisions of the High Pressure Gas Safety Law.

1) High Pressure Gas Safety Law

The High Pressure Gas Safety Law was established to prevent accidents arising due to high-pressure gas so as to ensure the public safety. Products such as gas containers for outdoor use gas ranges are excluded from application of this law, if meeting certain requirements indicated in the law. Note that when a product is not excluded from application by the law, a separate import inspection is required.

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

Mountaineering and camping equipment is subject to various regulations according to the products. The Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations apply to labeling for all products. Sale of mountaineering and camping equipment, in some cases, is subject to the Consumer Product Safety Law. 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.

- Mountain climbing ropes..... Consumer Product Safety Law
- Gas-fired portable cooking stoves LPG Law

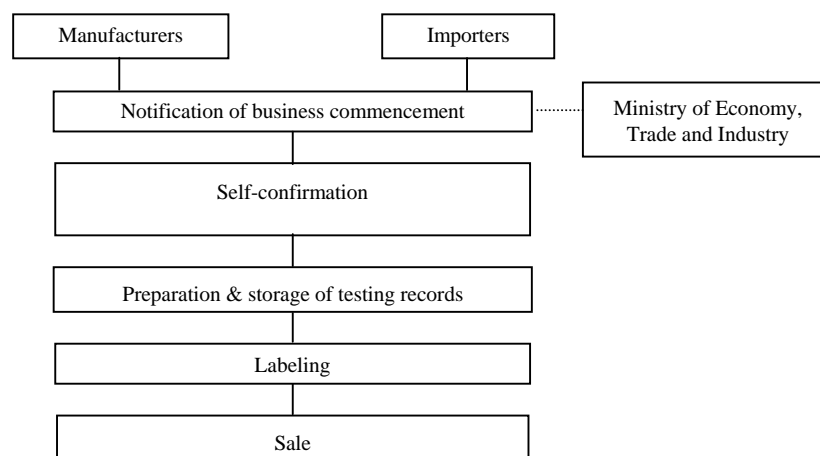
Apparel, thermos bottles, plastic kitchenware and canteens Household Goods Quality Labeling Law
 The four laws of consumer product safety—the Consumer Product Safety Law, the Gas Utility Industry Law, the LPG Law (the Law Concerning the Securing of Safety and the Optimization of Transaction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas), and the Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Law (former Electrical Appliance and Material Control Law) were revised in 1999. Under the amendment, government certification system was abolished and shifted to the system based on the self-confirmation. In principle, manufacturers or importers must confirm on their own that their products are compliant with technical standards, and must display required label items on the product to be sold in Japan. They are also required to prepare and maintain self-testing records. Any products imported and sold that are not compliant with the standards are subject to improvement orders or are prevented from displaying particular labels. Further, products with a high level of danger may be ordered recovered.

1) Consumer Product Safety Law

Mountain climbing ropes are designated as “specific products” under provisions of the Consumer Product Safety Law. Manufacturers or importers must carry out in-house testing, and preserve its records of self-confirmation for compliance with technical standards stipulated by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. Products verified as compliant must label the name of the importer and usage instructions and bear the PS mark. (see 4. Labeling)

Also, 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.

Fig. 3 Procedures under the Consumer Product Safety Law



2) LPG Law

This Law applies to gas-fired portable cooking stoves. Manufacturers or importers must carry out in-house testing, and preserve its records of self-confirmation for compliance with technical standards. Products verified as compliant must be accompanied with written usage instructions to be sold in Japan. (see 4. Labeling)

3) Household Goods Quality Labeling Law

There are labeling requirements under the Law for apparel, thermos bottles, synthetic resin kitchenware and canteens. (see 4. Labeling)

4) Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations

<Fair Competition Code Concerning Representations of Sporting Goods>

The Fair Trade Conference of Sporting Goods 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)

(3) Competent Agencies

- High Pressure Gas Safety Law / LPG Law
 Safety Division, Agency for Nuclear and Industrial Safety, Agency of Natural Resources and Energy,
 Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

- **Consumer Product Safety Law**
Product Safety Division, Commerce and Information Policy Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
TEL: 03-3501-1511 <http://www.meti.go.jp>
- **Law Concerning the Securing of Safety and the Optimization of Transaction of Liquefied Petroleum Gas**
Industrial Safety Division, Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy
TEL: 03-3501-1511 <http://www.enecho.go.jp>
- **Household Goods Quality Labeling Law**
Consumer Affairs Policy 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) Consumer Product Safety Law

Mountaineering ropes designated as “specific products” under provisions of the Law must stuck the PS Mark on its product label, thereby indicating compliance with technical standards. Labeling must also include other specified items of information.

- The PS Mark must appear in a readily visible location, and must be affixed so it will not readily come off or wear off.
- The following items of information must also appear, affixed so they will not readily come off or wear off:

Name of the applicant and approval symbol or code granted by the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, any warnings about proper usage as needed to assure safe usage

PS Mark
(specific products)



2) LPG Law

When selling gas-fired portable cooking stoves, they must label the required items and must stuck the Mark of Compliance shown right, thereby indicating compliance with technical standards. Labeling must also include other specified items of information.

Contact:

- Japan Gas Appliances Inspection Association (TEL: 03-5401-3980)

PS Mark



3) Household Goods Quality Labeling Law

This law applies to apparel, synthetic resin kitchen utensils, and thermos bottles and other heat-retaining containers. Note should be taken at the time of sale that there are labeling requirements for the following types of camping gear under the law.

Example labeling for plastic canteen based on the Household Quality Labeling Law

Product name		Canteen
Resin material used	Body	Polyethylene
	Cap	Polypropylene
Maximum usable temperature	Body	100 degrees Celsius
	Cap	120 degrees Celsius
Net contents	800ml	
Usage warning:	1) Do not leave near an open flame. 2) Cleaning this item with a scrubbing brush, or cleaning powder may scratch the surface	
Labeler: XYZ Corp., Ltd.	Address:	X-X, YY-machi, ZZ Prefecture

Note 1: The provisions for the quality labeling of textile products under the Household Goods Quality Labeling Law were amended on October 1, 1997 to make labeling of the composition, handling, labeler, and place to contact obligatory.

Note 2: The information to be labeled for synthetic resin products are set by the provisions for quality labeling of synthetic resin products under the Household Goods Quality Labeling Law while the information for thermos bottles are set by the provisions for quality labeling of miscellaneous industrial products under the law.

<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

1) JIS Mark

The JIS mark may be attached to industrial products conforming to the relevant Japan Industrial Standard (JIS) established under the Industrial Standardization Law (JIS Law) and meeting standards of examination regarding technical production conditions required for maintenance of quality covering manufacturing facilities, quality control methods, etc. This applies to mountaineering rope, mountaineering helmets, lights, kocher, knives, thermos bottles and copper buckets.

Contact:

- Japanese Standards Association TEL: 03-3583-8005 <http://www.jsa.or.jp>

JIS Mark



(3) Voluntary Industry Labeling

1) SG Mark

This applies to mountaineering products (rope, helmets, karabiner, climbing irons, belts, haken, ice picks, ice hammers). Products that comply with safety criteria established by the Consumer Product Safety Association are eligible to display the SG (Safety Goods) Mark. When consumers are injured during the use of a SG-approved product, each injured party is eligible to receive up to ¥100 million in damages. The guarantee is only valid, however, for personal injuries.

There are two methods for obtaining compliance certification: the lot inspection method, under which a test facility performs compliance testing on behalf of the Association, or the type approval system, under which Association approval is granted to registered factories. Lot inspection and factory registration may both be conducted abroad.

Contact:

- Consumer Product Safety Association TEL: 03-5255-3631 <http://www.sg-mark.org>

SG Mark



2) Fair Competition Code Concerning Representations of Sporting Goods

The Fair Trade Conference of Sporting Goods, which covers five sporting goods related trade organizations, defines the following labeling items which apply to the manufacture and sale of sporting goods (see Fig. 4). These are voluntary regulations for the sporting goods industry that apply to member companies of the Conference. While they are not legally binding on non-members, when the law is enforced they are considered equivalent to the Fair Competition Code, the legal effect of which often extends to non-members.

Contact:

- The Fair Trade Conference of Sporting Goods TEL: 03-3219-2531

3) JASPO Voluntary Standards

Products that comply with quality standards of the Association of Japan Sporting Goods Industries may display a Proof of Quality Mark and a Quality Label (indicating the percentage of down, feathers or fiber content). Applies to products containing down.

Contact:

- Association of Japan Sporting Goods Industries (JASPO) TEL: 03-3219-2041

JASPO Mark



Fig. 4 Required label items for sporting goods

Required items	Requirements for makers or importers			Requirements for retailers	
	Catalogue	Products	Instruction manual	Products at storefront	Flyers
1. Manufacturer name and trademark	O	O		O	O
2. Product and model name	O	O	O	O	O
3. Materials	O	O		O	
4. Dimensions or specifications	O	O		O	
5. Country of origin	O	O		O	
6. Description of accessories	O		O	O	O
7. Usage warning (only when required)	O		O		
8. Company name and address	O		O + Tel No.		O
9. Date of issuance	O				
10. Contacts for after-sales service and customer inquiries	O		O		
11. Retail price				O	O
12. Processing cost (only when required)				O	O
13. Sales quantity or sales term limitation, if applicable					O
14. Other items as required by regulation	O	O		O	

Source: *The Fair Trade Conference of Sporting Goods*

5. Taxes

(1) Customs Duties

Mountaineering and camping equipment encompasses different types of items such as rucksacks (HS No. 42), apparel (No. 61), tents (No. 63), footwear (No. 64), cooking appliance (No. 73), lumps (HS No. 94), and table accessories (HS Nos. 44, 73, 74, 75, 76). It is impossible to list all HS numbers. For details, please refer to “Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan” or contact the Customs. Fig. 5 presents customs duties on tents, for example.

Tents are eligible for preferential tariff program. In order to apply for preferential tariff rates, the importer should submit a certificate of origin issued by the Customs or other issuing agency in the country of export (not required if the total value of the shipment is no greater than ¥200,000). For more details, please contact the Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance.

Fig. 5 Customs duties on tents

HS No.	Description	Rate of Duty (%)			
		General	WTO	Preferential	Temporary
6306.21-000	Tents: 1. Of cotton	6.7%	6.2%	Free	
6306.22-000	2. Of synthetic fibres	4.8%	4.4%	Free	
6306.29-000	3. Of other textile materials	4.8%	4.4%	Free	

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

(2) Consumption Tax

$$(CIF + \text{Customs duty}) \times 5\%$$

6. Product Characteristics

Virtually all mountaineering and camping products originated in Europe or the United States. Because of the long tradition behind these products, they have many excellent and highly original features. Most are superior to comparable Japanese products in terms of product quality, performance and design, and consumer confidence is high.

Southern Europe (France and Italy)

Products reflect the brightness of climate and terrain of these countries. Rucksacks and outdoor wear are also known for their high fashion appeal.

Northern Europe (Germany and Austria)

Most products feature high product quality and performance. Mountaineering products have a lengthy tradition, and these countries win praise the world over for their product development capabilities.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is known around the world for its wool industries, and it is prominent in the outdoor apparel area.

United States

Many American products sport unique features that reflect the energetic and outgoing behavior of American people.

Asian countries

Many American and European products are produced under license in Asia. This has made it possible in recent years for Asian nations to supply high-quality products.

7. Domestic Distribution System and Business Practices

(1) Domestic Market Conditions

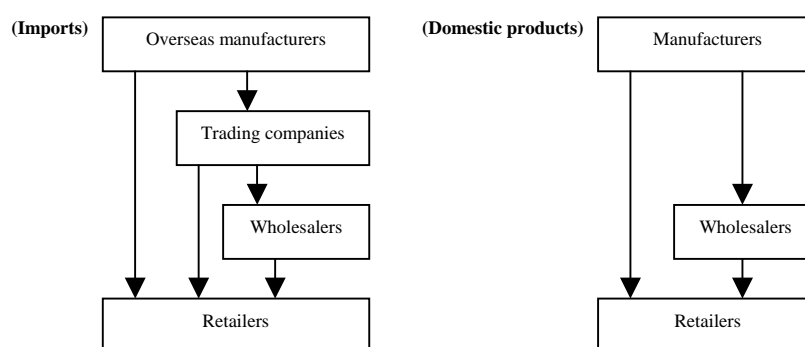
Against the background of the growing popularity of outdoor sports, the market for mountaineering and camping equipment has showed a continued remarkable growth. In recent years, however, inventories began increasing, indicating that the market is now entering a stable growth period, shifting from the period of rapid growth in the proceeding years. According to “The Leisure White Paper” published by the Institute for Free Time Design, the market size for mountaineering and camping equipment reached ¥179 billion in 2000. Behind the sharp growth in 1990s it was found a sharply increased population of auto campers, a mountaineering boom among middle aged and aged people and town-use of young people. However, the demand of family-use, which has sharply risen, is over the peak. Some products like tents tend to down in sales.

The mountaineering and camping equipment market has been polarized into two categories, first, the market segment for high-quality products which can be used for outdoor sports, and the second segment for low-priced products which are mainly sold through home centers and discount stores. The market of products for famous brand products dominate outdoor sports imported from Europe and North America. On the other hand, low-priced products are mainly imported from Asian countries such as China.

(2) Distribution Channels

Imported brand products are sold through specialty mountaineering and marine sports stores. On the other hand, low-priced camping products are often sold through home centers and discount stores. The most common distribution channels are those illustrated in the following figure. However, import sales promotions and stiffer competition have led more manufacturers to short-circuit this process and instead work directly with retail outlets.

Fig. 6 Distribution channels for mountaineering and camping equipment



(3) Key Considerations for entering the Japanese Market

- 1) Prospective importers must conduct thorough research into the Japanese market (to discern Japanese people’s product preferences and attitudes toward product quality and assess the availability of camping facilities).
- 2) Importers must make sure they have a complete after-sales service program in place.
- 3) Importers must make sure that sales people are trained well enough to give first-time buyers the information and assistance they often need. They should also include easy-to-understand assembly instructions for tents and other accessory products.

8. After-Sales Service

Many imports are handled by authorized dealer agents who take responsibility for selling the product and providing after-sales service. Many importers and retailers now have their own repair and service facilities that can provide after-sales service.

9. Related Product Categories

Related product categories include marine sports equipment, skydiving equipment, and other outdoor sporting goods.

10. Direct Imports by Individuals

Direct imports by individuals are not subject to any type of restriction or regulation.

11. Related Organizations

- Association of Japan Sporting Goods Industries TEL: 03-3219-2041
- The Sporting Goods Importers Association of Japan TEL: 03-3265-0901