

# Regional Differences in Guy-Wires for utility poles in Japan

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**Guy-Wires** are used in many countries to add stability to utility poles, in most cases the Guy-Wires are covered with an insulating material for safety reasons.

In Japan you can find several types of Guy-Wire insulators and those can be used sometimes to have a better guess on the region you are in.

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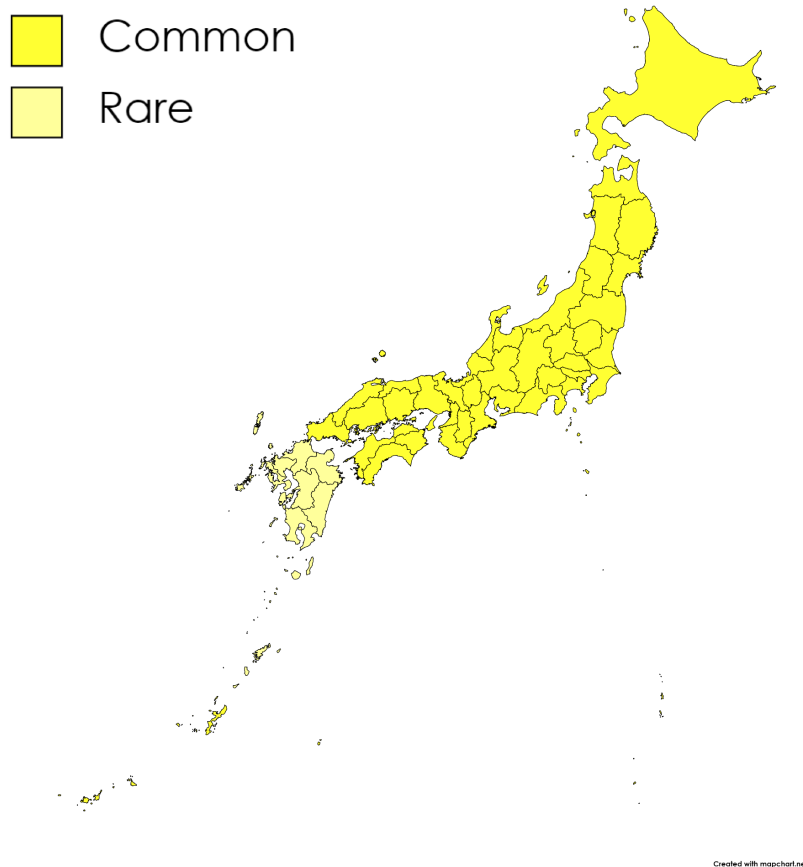
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# Common Guy-Wires

## YELLOW GUY-WIRES

Let's start with the most boring one, **Yellow Guy-Wires** are a **very common** sight in Japan, They are found on **every Island** and don't really help with region guessing other than in some very rare occasions.

There is actually still some hope for Yellow Guy-Wires as they come in very **many shapes and forms** and I haven't specifically looked into all of them so there might be more to discover but for now I just labelled all of them as the same because I'm lazy.



So as you can see from the distribution map, generic Yellow Guy-Wires are found **all over Japan**, however they seem to be **less common on Kyushu**. Yellow Guy-Wires in Kyushu seem to be slightly more common in the north-west, more precisely in **Nagasaki and Saga prefectures** but they have been seen in other parts as well.



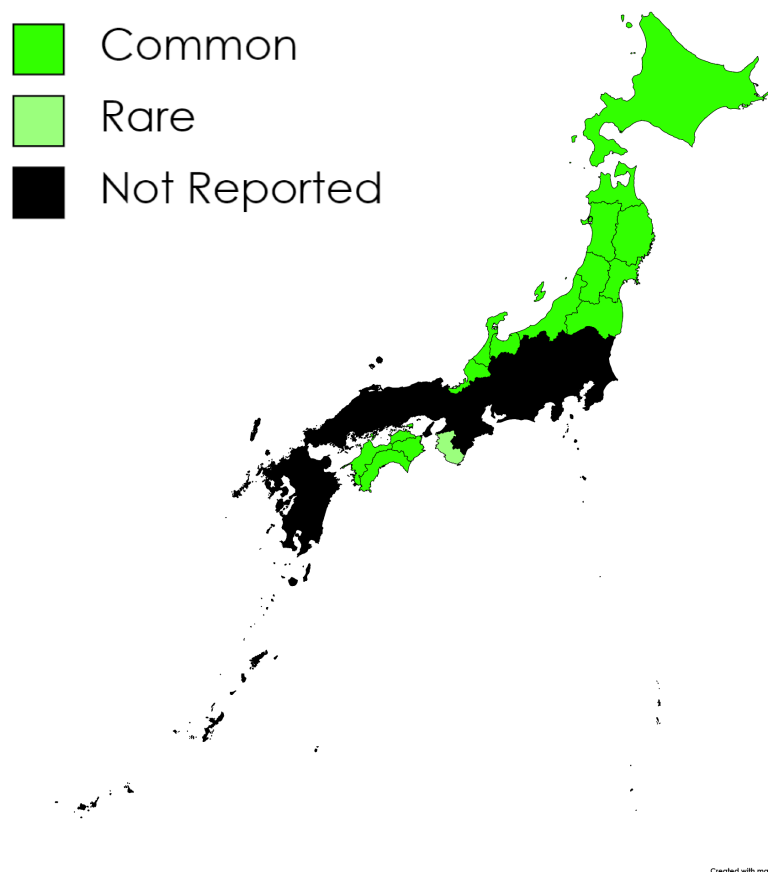
Not much to say about those ones, they are very common, very irregular and very well spread across the country so not useful for region guessing, although it could be good to keep in mind that they are **less common in Kyushu** and when they are found in Kyushu there is a slightly higher chance of being in the North-West of the island.

What all types of Generic Yellow Guy-Wires have in common is that they have a boring shape, usually a **cylinder** or **slightly more flat** (Far right and far left types in the picture above are the most common ones, central image isn't very common but those are not even all of the different types), and the fact that they are yellow with sometimes small black details.



## NORTHERN GUY-WIRES

The **Northern Style for Guy-Wires** consists of a smooth, cylindrical cover with a pattern of **alternating yellow and black lines**. It is very similar to one or possibly two more types of Japanese Guy-Wires but they can usually be distinguished with ease even from a distance. There are two types of Northern Guy-Wires and it is currently unknown if they are found in separate areas.



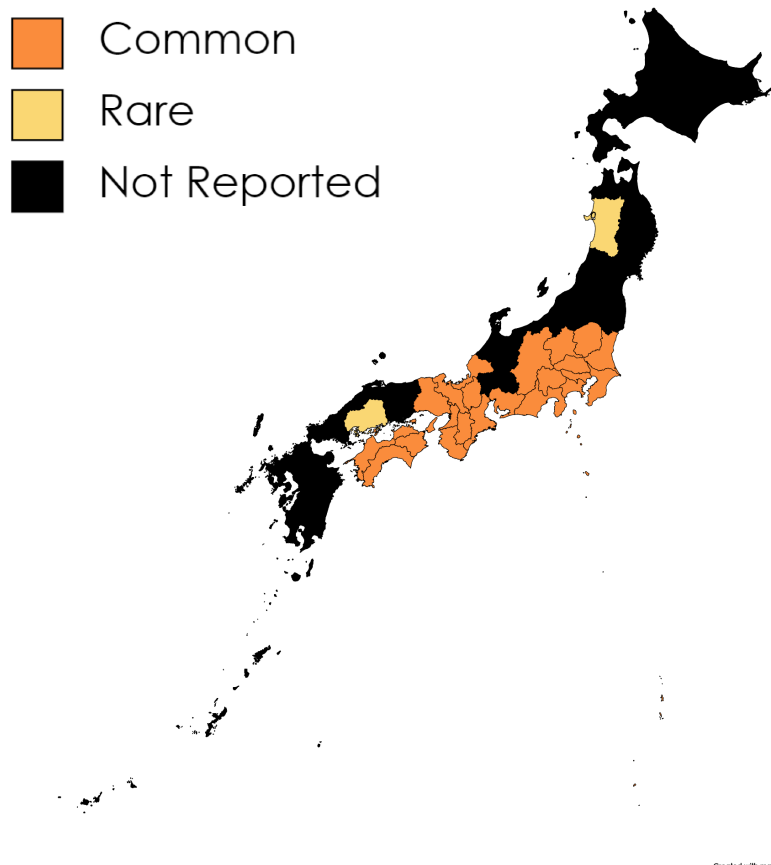
As you might think, Northern Guy-Wires are mostly **found in the northern half of Japan**, a notable exception to that is the island of **Shikoku**, as you will learn soon, Shikoku is quite a mess when it comes to Guy-Wires but that's what makes it recognisable.



The two variants of Northern Guy-Wires can be distinguished as one is **thin** while the other is **thick**. It feels like both can be found in the same region but there might be some small differences in how common they are in single prefectures.

## SOUTHERN GUY-WIRES

**Southern style Guy-Wires** are the counterpart to Norther Guy-Wires, they are **Yellow with some Black details** and a “**bottle**” shape, meaning they are thick at the ground and then thin out at about half of their length. They can sometimes be similar to the Kyushu style Guy-Wires that we’ll see soon.



As I said before, Southern Guy-Wires are the **counterpart** to Northern Guy-Wires as they are for the most part only found in different prefectures with a somewhat well established border between the two areas. There are as you can see some exceptions to that, notably (as it's often the case) **Shikoku** is an outlier as you can find **both Northern style and Southern style** there. **Fukui prefecture** also has both Northern and Southern styles but the Northern style seems to only be found in the **far north** of the prefecture. I could only find one instance of Southern style Guy-Wires in **Akita** and **Hiroshima** prefectures.

Another notable prefecture is Gifu, where I couldn't find any Northern nor Southern style Guy-Wires, which makes it the only prefecture in Central Honshu to not have either one of them.



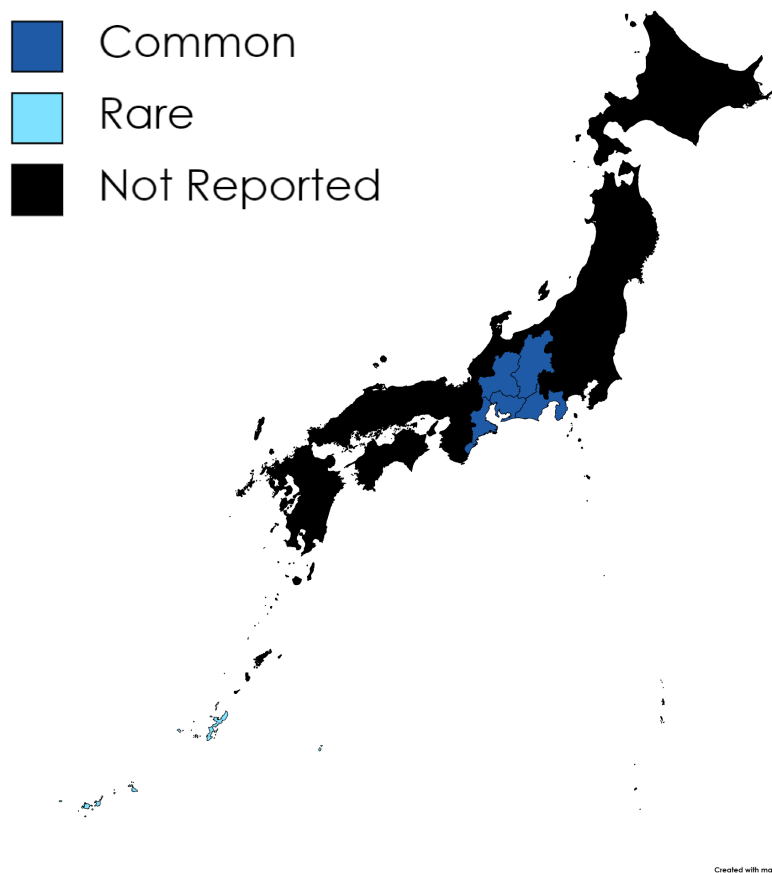
**Southern Guy-Wires** have a fairly standard look, they are a prime example of what I call a **bottle shaped Guy-Wire** with a thicker cylinder close to the ground that suddenly narrows down to a much thinner cylinder as you go up. They can sometimes present more black details but their general look always stays the same with a **yellow base and some black** on the part that transitions between the two sizes.



## NAGANO GUY-WIRES

I decided to maintain my original name for these ones even though they are **not prefecture specific** to Nagano as those are the first Guy-Wires I noticed looked different and the ones that made me look into this meta in the first place, a more correct name would be **Mie-Nagano Guy-Wires**.

Those Guy-Wires are very distinctive with their **bottle shape** and alternating **Black and Yellow sections** (usually 2 black and 2 yellow, sometimes 3 black and 3 yellow).



As you can see we are starting to get into the interesting ones, Nagano style Guy-Wires are mostly found in 5 prefectures: **Mie, Gifu, Aichi, Shizuoka and Nagano**.

Although I lost the location I am fairly sure I have seen them once on Okinawa but other than that they are very region specific and very common in those prefectures.

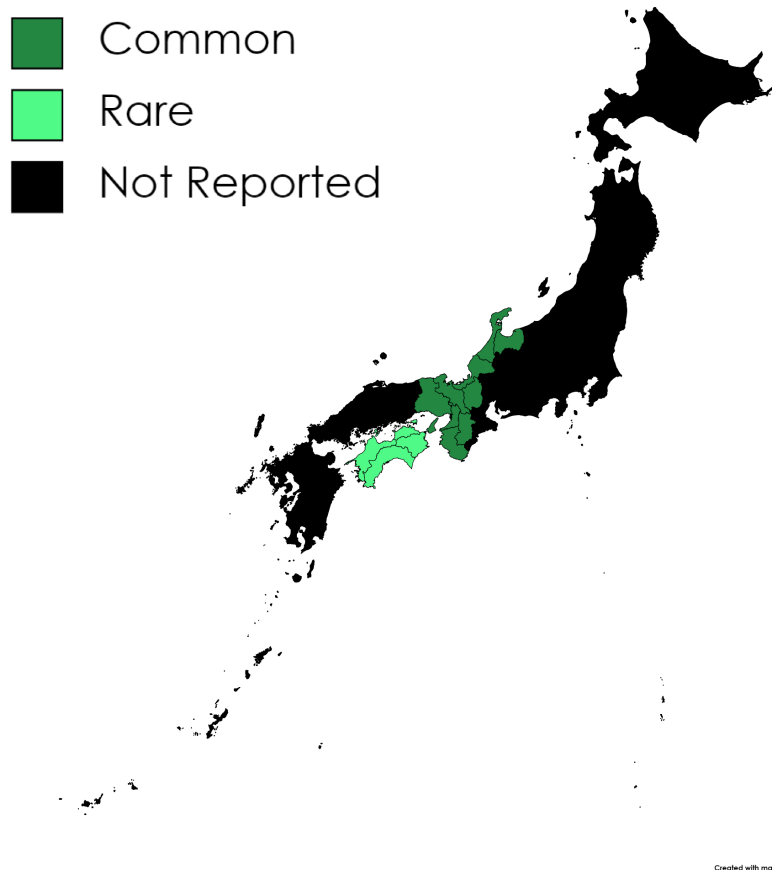




**Nagano Guy-Wires** are similar to **Southern Guy-Wires** as they also have a bottle shape, although less noticeable than in some other bottle shaped Guy-Wires. Their pattern however is **very unique** and can't really be confused for any other type of Guy-Wire even from a distance.

## WAKAYAMA-TOYAMA GUY-WIRES

**Wakayama-Toyama Guy-Wires** (or **Wa-To** for short) were originally grouped together with Northern style Guy-Wires, but due to their unique shape and limited distribution are now separate. They are basically Northern Guy-Wires but with an obvious **bottle shape**.



As the name suggests, Wakayama-Toyama Guy-Wires are mostly found in the prefectures that go as south as from Wakayama and as north as Toyama, the complete list is: **Wakayama, Nara, Osaka, Hyogo, Kyoto, Shiga, Fukui, Ishikawa and Toyama.**

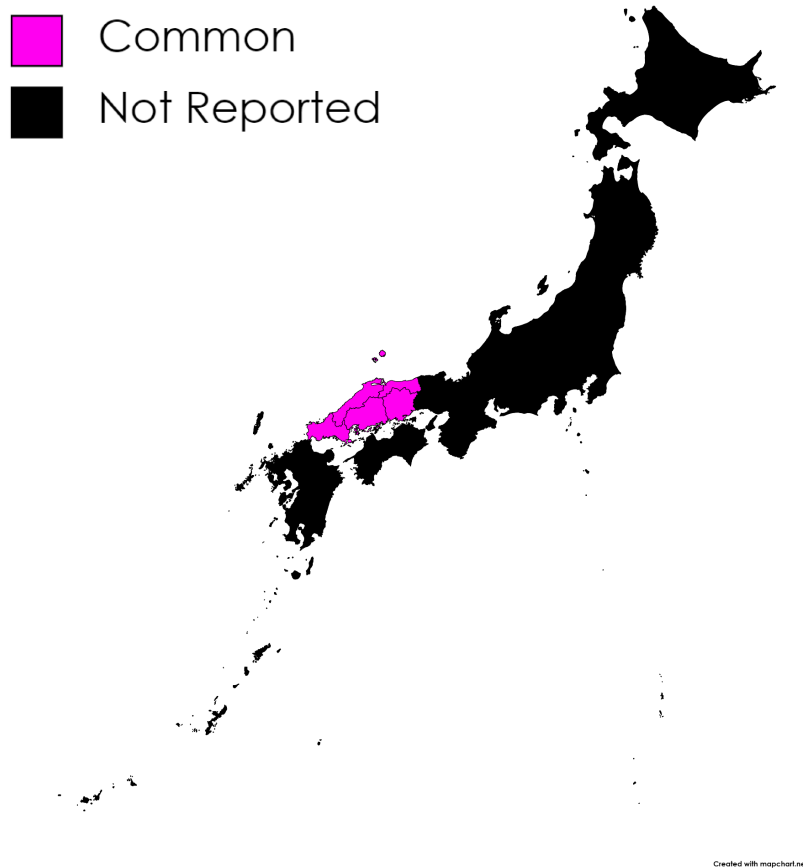
The only outlier is, as usual, **Shikoku** where they are not the most common type of Guy-Wire but definitely present in all four prefectures.



**Wa-To Guy-Wires** are fairly easy to recognise, they can only be confused with Northern style Guy-Wires but at a closer inspection the differences are quite striking. Other bottle-shaped Guy-Wires are **always very different** (other than maybe one exception, but not really a useful one, we'll see that in the rare Guy-Wire section).

## CHUGOKU GUY-WIRE

**Chugoku Guy-Wires** are fairly **easy**, they are yellow like many other types of Guy-Wires but what is really unique about this one is its shape. They often have **two cables** going into a single **rounded container** (although versions with a single cable are also present).



**Chugoku Guy-Wires** are unique to the region of Chugoku in **Southern Honshu**. This region is fairly consistent with its Guy-Wires, mostly having Chugoku style and **Generic Yellow style Guy-Wires**.

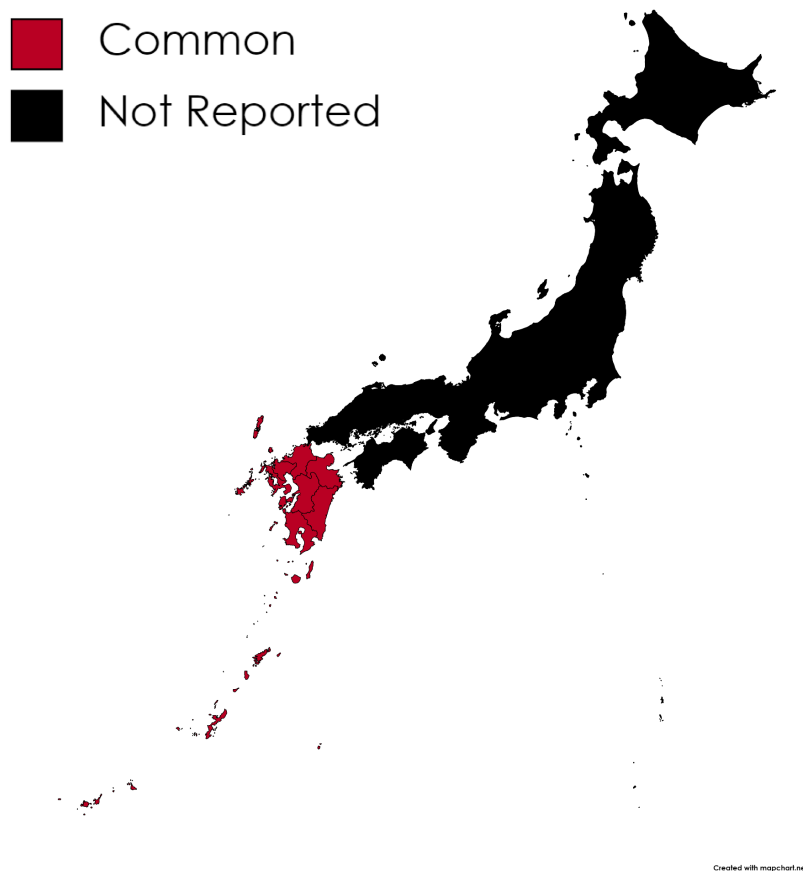


Chugoku Guy-Wires are usually of a **darker tint** of yellow than Generic Yellow Guy-Wires, almost orange sometimes and have an obvious **bulge** close to the ground that is also present in single-cable versions.



## KYUSHU GUY-WIRES

We've finally gotten to the last one of the common Guy-Wires of Japan, the **Kyushu Guy-Wires** are quite **unique** although from certain angles they can look almost identical to Southern style Guy-Wires. They are yellow with black details and almost a bottle shape but it is always different from normal Southern style Guy-Wires as the thick part closer to the ground is not really a cylinder, they always remind me of the **shape of a paddle** rather than a baseball bat.



**Kyushu Guy-Wires** are extremely useful as they are not found anywhere else other than **Kyushu and Okinawa**, on top of that the infamous Yellow Guy-Wires are not really common in Kyushu meaning the vast majority of Guy-Wires on the island are in fact Kyushu style. The rarity of the Yellow variety on Kyushu is also a good way to distinguish **Okinawa** prefecture as **Yellow Guy-Wires are common there** although don't forget that some generic Yellow Guy-Wires can be found on Kyushu as well (**Nagasaki** and **Saga** prefectures especially).



Here's how Kyushu style Guy-Wires look like, the **“paddle shape”** rather than “bottle” or “baseball bat” shape is the main way of distinguishing it from [Southern style Guy-Wires](#). From some angles it can be really hard to tell the two styles apart, especially from a distance, but there are definitely some good differences between the two.

Also keep in mind that sometimes Kyushu style Guy-Wires can have **two** thin wires going into the same thick part at the bottom (they are usually parallel to each other and really not similar to the [Chugoku Guy-Wires](#)).

Finally, Kyushu style Guy-Wires are similar to a fairly rare type of Guy-Wire that we'll see soon in the [Rare Guy-Wires](#) section.

## What to look for

Guy-Wires for utility poles are an extremely common sight in most of Japan, they can be found in both Rural and Urban areas and they are usually needed to add stability when a pole is at risk of falling due to an unequal lateral load, for example when the powerline curves or it stops and the cables pull the pole in one direction you need a Guy-Wire to add a equal pull to the pole in the other direction.

It is very common in Japan to find more than one Guy-Wire insulator at once like in the image below:



In this case, a generic Yellow Guy-Wire and a Nagano Guy-Wire found in Aichi prefecture.

Also very common is seeing more than one pole that needs Guy-Wires at once, for example:



On both sides of the road you can see a Nagano and a Southern Guy-Wires.



This can be used sometimes to get even **more precise guesses**, a big example of this is **Shikoku**, as we've established already Shikoku Guy-Wires are a bit of a mess but that's really not a bad thing, in fact seeing both a [Northern style Guy-Wire](#) and a [Southern style Guy-Wire](#) can lead you to reliably guess **Shikoku**.



Here we see a **Northern** and a **Southern** style Guy-Wires together in Ehime prefecture, **Shikoku**.

As another example [Northern style](#) and [Wakayama-Toyama style](#) only overlap in a bunch of prefectures, all of **Shikoku** for example but more commonly in **Toyama** and **Ishikawa** prefectures



Here we can see on the two sides of the road a **Wakayama-Toyama** (on the right) and a **Northern style Guy-Wire** (on the left) in Toyama prefecture.

## Rare Guy-Wires

While mapping Guy-Wires across Japan I've come across a bunch of weird looking Guy-Wires that don't really match any of the common ones I've listed above:



Those Guy-Wires resemble the [Wa-To Guy-Wires](#) but have a **thin extra black line** on the thick lower part, I've found those only twice in Fukui and Wakayama prefectures so still in the Wa-To Guy-Wire range which means this is **probably just a rare alternative** to the more common version of Wakayama-Toyama style Guy-Wire.





This second rare Guy-Wire is a bit **more interesting**, it's similar to the Northern style Guy-Wire but has an extra bit of insulating material on the bottom giving it an almost bottle shape look, this extra insulating material can be **either Black or Yellow** and what's interesting about those is that I've only seen them in far **Northern Honshu**, in **Aomori** and in Northern **Iwate** and **Akita** prefectures (the black one was in Akita) however I definitely haven't looked into this Guy-Wire enough as I've only seen it three times but there might be more to it.



The third and last oddity is **similar** to a [Kyushu Guy-Wire](#) but in the shape of a [Chugoku Guy-Wire](#), sort of a hybrid between the two, a good clue to distinguish it from the Kyushu style is that the thick part is **much shorter** and **doesn't reach all the way to the ground** but rather becomes thin again before getting there, just like a Chugoku Guy-Wire.

# Why you should learn Guy-Wires

There are several reasons why you should learn Guy-Wire meta for Japan:

First of all it is extremely easy to learn it, you really just need to learn 6 Guy-Wires and you will be able to at the very least split in half the country when guessing. If you have already read the document thus far, chances are you already know everything you need and just need to start paying attention to them while playing GeoGuessr.

You can also learn this meta at different levels:

even if you don't remember every single prefecture where you can find them, seeing a Nagano style Guy-Wire will be an easy plonk in Nagano/Gifu area or seeing a Northern style Guy-Wire will very often mean you are north Tokyo somewhere (if you assume Shikoku doesn't exist at least).

But you can also learn them better, even if in the vast majority of cases Guy-Wires alone won't narrow your guess down to a single prefecture they can absolutely help deciding when in doubt between a few if put together with other clues.

Guy-Wires are also extremely common in Japan, every round has a good chance of having a Guy-Wire even if just a useless general Yellow one. Unlike most other Japanese meta, Guy-Wires are big and colourful and often very easy to spot in no time, which means you can get decent Japanese guesses in very fast formats like Blink Mode or just some good old 10s NMPZ.

The last reason why you should learn Guy-Wire meta for Japan is that if nobody does it and everyone just ignores this document I'll probably cry a little bit :)

**Thanks for reading! I hope this was useful as it's a very beginner friendly meta even if you are not (yet) a big Japan nerd on GeoGuessr and it will improve your Japan guesses!**

**Meta testing and Document writing done with love, by [ananananananah](#)  
This might be subject to further editing in the future**