

Special Notes: Comprehensive Safety Measures Implemented by Public Transportation Operators

In recent years, serious accidents and problems have frequently occurred in public transportation, such as the derailment of the JR West Fukuchiyama Line in April 2005, and a series of problems in air transport caused by human errors or mechanical problems. Various factors are pointed out as the causes of human errors, e.g. the principle of safety first having turned into a mere shell, insufficient communication and information-sharing between the management sector and the operational sector as well as between the departments, and inadequate involvement of top management in safety initiatives. There is a pressing need to review the existing organizations and systems of public transportation operators and eliminate these problems, thereby restoring public confidence in public transportation.

The government will implement the following cross-sectoral measures in addition to safety measures for the individual fields of transportation, i.e. automobile, railway, vessel, and aircraft, set out in Part 1 Chapter 1 Section II, Part 1 Chapter 2 Section II, Part 2 Section II, and Part 3 Section II.

(1) Establishing safety management systems and implementing continuous measures

In order to ensure the safety of public transportation by land, sea and air by disseminating safety awareness within organizations of public transportation operators and building a climate for safety, the government will obligate transportation operators of automobiles, railways, vessels and aircrafts to develop Safety Management Manuals that state the policies of business operations for ensuring transportation safety, organization control and communication on safety in various sectors, implementation of internal audits, and continual review and improvement of business operations, as well as to appoint Safety General Manager. By driving transportation operators to conduct top management-led autonomous and continual review and improvement of business operations for securing the safety of transportation through these measures, the government will encourage transportation operators to build a safety management system that involves every level of operator, from top management to the operational sector. At the same time, the government will introduce Evaluation of Transport Safety Management Posture by which the government will evaluate safety management postures at management level.

(2) Developing technology to prevent accidents induced by human errors

Human machine systems will become increasingly advanced and complex in the future by the sophistication and density growth of transportation.

To prevent accidents caused by human errors, the government will not only introduce new advanced technological systems, but will also promote the development of technology to help persons operating public transportation to notice any hazardous conditions, and the development of technology to enable operation managers to understand the status of operation and provide appropriate support.