

Traffic Safety Fair contributions to traffic accident reduction and the Fair's termination

Fatalities by traffic accidents in 1976 were less than 10,000 for the first time in 18 years since 1958, and this is being taken as an opportunity to hold a Traffic Safety Fair on behalf of implementing and initiating traffic safety awareness in the citizens. Transport Measures Headquarters came up with "the outline for the Traffic Safety Fair" in 1977, and held the Fair in the same year at the Science Museum for the first time. The Traffic Safety Fair had been held 32 times by the Cabinet Office, Metropolis Traffic Council of Countermeasures (since 1980) and the Traffic Safety Fair Promotion Council (which was in the private sector) as a dissemination and education project for traffic safety awareness. It was part of the Nationwide Traffic Safety Campaign held in the fall and an opportunity to learn traffic safety and traffic safety manners in a fun way by attending and experiencing the events.

Fatalities from traffic accidents have been decreasing since the early 90's despite an increase in automobile ownership and the number of driver's license holders in recent years. Automobile ownership and the number of driver's license holders will continue to increase. The annual number of traffic accident fatalities was less than 5,500 in 2008, and attained the objective, which was laid down in the Eighth Fundamental Traffic Safety Program "to reduce the number of fatalities resulting from traffic accidents to 5,500 or lower by 2010", sooner than expected.

This was the result of aggressive activities by the relevant administrative agencies and traffic related organizations. And promotion activities, traffic safety education, improvement of traffic safety facilities and guidance/control on streets are among the activities.

Safety promotion publicity, mainly carried out by traffic related organizations, was one of the important pillars of promulgation and implementation of traffic safety awareness, and the Traffic Safety Fair in particular had been very effective in increasing traffic safety awareness by the public. Unfortunately, the Traffic Safety Fair sponsors' network and other groups, who were running the events, had to disperse for many reasons, despite their awareness of the necessity of holding the event to target a broad range of age groups and of working effectively money wise. The Traffic Safety Fair has a long history, which ended in 2008.

In the absence of the Traffic Safety Fair, the continuation of safety campaigns by utilizing the accumulation of experiences to ensure prevention of traffic accidents, still needs to be promoted for better traffic safety.



32nd Traffic Safety Fair poster



Simulation using seat belts

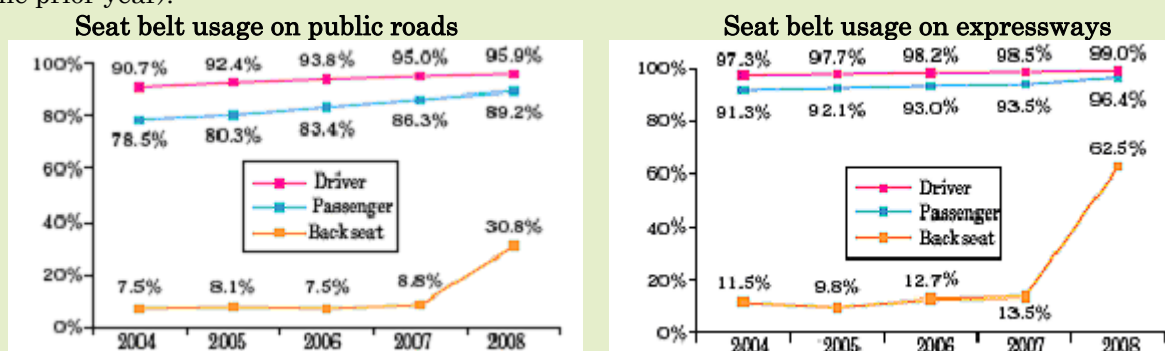
Efforts to be taken to encourage seat belt use for all passengers

The use of seat belts for back seat passengers is now required, effective June 2008. Drivers who violate this regulation on the expressway will get penalty points.

Injuries from traffic accidents will be dramatically reduced by the wearing of seat belts. For instance, in 2008 the fatality risk to seat belt wearers would be significantly low -- one third as many as for those not wearing seat belts. And the number of serious head injuries to drivers and front seat passengers from collision by a person in the back seat would be reduced to one fifteenth by the wearing of seat belts (National Agency for Automotive Safety and Victim's Aid experiment data).

1. Seat belt usage rate

A national survey conducted in October 2008 (by the National Police Agency and the Japan Automobile Federation (JAF)) shows positive results -- that 30.8% of back seat passengers wear seat belts on public roads (22.0% up from the prior year) and 62.5% on expressways (49.0% up from the prior year).



2. Seat belt campaign initiatives

The police have been taking initiatives to promote seat belt use for all passengers by using primary registration year "seat belt convincer" (simulated car crashes) at events and by holding other seat belt campaigns.



Street campaign



Participation and experience type education utilizing seat belt convincer



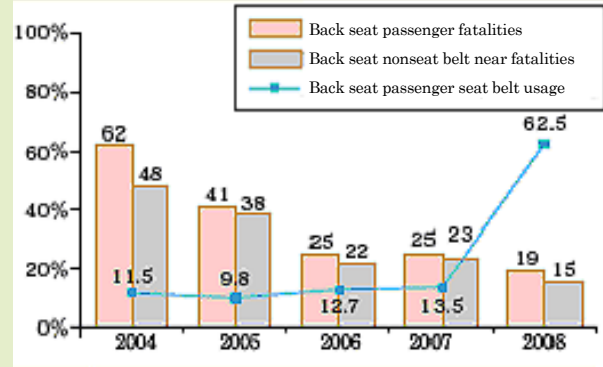
Educational poster

3. Measurements of seat belt usage on expressways

A variety of activities were held in order to educate the public and promote the wearing of seat belts in back seats in particular through September 2008. The rate of seat belt usage by back seat passengers was low on expressways despite penalty points imposed against drivers whose back seat passengers violate the regulation. Public education activities have been carried out continuously since October, and street control has been implemented by checking for seat belt violations.

A total of 19 back seat passengers died in 2008. This was 6 less than the prior year of 25.

With the co-operation of concerned organizations and groups such as Expressway Company and the Traffic Safety Council, the prefectural police headquarters used every opportunity to enforce seat belt use for all seats, and used public media simultaneously with traffic safety campaigns at interchanges and service areas on expressways.



Note: The figure does not include unknown seat belt usage



Traffic safety campaign



Publicity on tour bus



Display at baseball field

The National Police Agency supervised the promotional DVD, "Impact of 100 km/hr crash! Danger of back seat without seat belt", created by Japan Traffic Safety Association. The DVD has been distributed to concerned organizations and groups, and is being shown at service areas and in traffic safety classes.



DVD for PR and Education: "Impact of 100 km/hr crash! Danger of back seat without seat belt"

4. Seat belts for pregnant women

The Japan Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology expressed their view in April 2008 that injuries to mothers and unborn children will be reduced if pregnant women wear seat belts that do not place pressure on their abdomens. The National Police Agency responded immediately and made a partial amendment to the provisions of traffic rules (National Public Safety Commission Notice No. 3 of 1978) in November of the same year in order to publicize the necessity for pregnant women to wear seat belts in the appropriate way.

- The pregnant woman and the unborn child could be protected from injury from a traffic accident by wearing a seat belt.
- The shoulder belt should not place pressure on the abdomen and should be worn with a lap belt.

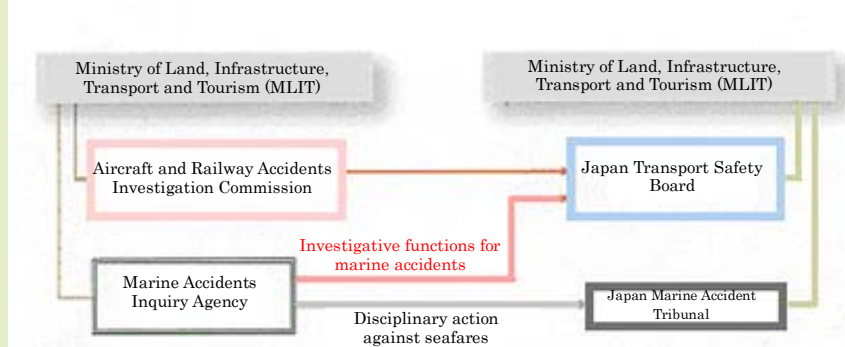
Proper seat belt usage by pregnant women is regulated and has been broadly publicized.

A poster, created by the Japan Traffic Safety Association showing how a pregnant woman should wear a seat belt appropriately, has been distributed to obstetric and gynecology clinics nationwide.



Establishment of the Japan Transport safety Board (JTSB)

In light of great concerns among the public for their safety and public transport accidents/troubles in recent years, they are arousing high expectations toward transport accident investigation organizations. In order to respond to the expectations, the Japan Transport Safety Board (hereinafter referred to as “JTSB”) and the Japan Marine Accident Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as “JMAT”) were established on October 1, 2008 from the reconstitution of the Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission (hereinafter referred to as “ARAIC”) and the Marine Accident Inquiry Agency to enhance and to integrate the framework for investigation of causes of railway, marine and aircraft accidents.



Investigations of the causes of marine accidents had been conducted in conjunction with disciplinary actions against seafarers licenses in marine accident inquiries in Japan. However, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has required that marine safety investigation should be separated from disciplinary actions, and be conducted with the objective of preventing accident in the future. This is now the international codification and will become effective in January 2010. The necessity for improvement of frameworks and functions of the Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission has been pointed out at the National Diet as well, long before the reorganization and scope expansion of operations in land, sea and air.

Taking into consideration such circumstances, on October 1, 2008, marine accidents are added to the coverage of the investigation to determine the causes of accidents in ARAIC, on the other hand, disciplinary actions are under JMAT's control. ARAIC was reorganized into the Japan Transport Safety Board, which is described in Article 3 of the National Government Organization Act as equivalent to the ministries of the government, resulting in independent supervision of the frameworks, high-level planning and implementation of policies. ARAIC was upgraded from the council of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) for its employees to have appointive power and authority to establish rules as part of functional improvement of the commission.

As a stronger independent specialized investigative agency, JTSB performs fair and neutral on-site investigations, including gathering relevant material by its staffs at aircraft, railway and marine accident sites. The factors, which related to the accidents, are analyzed scientifically and with a neutral point of view. And recurrence prevention measures are broadly publicized by JTSB. The functions of JTSB for accident recurrence prevention are improved as well, including giving recommendations to parties relevant to the causes.

There are four major effectiveness of the establishment of JTSB:

(1) Improved investigation function for identifying the causes of accidents

The investigation of the causes of railway, marine and aircraft accidents by one organization increases utilization of specific knowledge relating to human factors that are common in land, sea and air. An efficient, organized operation has made it possible to improve the analysis of the causes of accidents.

(2) Improved recurrence prevention functions

ARAIC could only make recommendations to Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, but with the new system JTSB is able to make recommendations directly to parties relevant to the causes. Recurrence prevention measures, such as the requests of reports by JTSB from those who are given recommendations, were newly installed in the framework. In addition, now JTSB may, when the parties relevant to the cause that have been made the recommendations, have not taken any measures in accordance with the recommendations without justifiable grounds, make it public to that effect.

(3) Improved investigation frameworks

Sufficient investigation support for investigators is implemented and analysis functions are improved as well. Moreover, co-operation with foreign investigative agencies and technical supports for underdeveloped countries are also established for further improvement of the frameworks.

(4) Better provision of information to accident victims and their families

The investigations of the accidents bear an obligation under the act to fully consider the sentiments of victims and their families, and provide them with information regarding the investigations of the accidents on a timely and in an appropriate manner. Based on this obligation, the information will be provided adequately by using such methods as holding relevant briefing sessions for interim reports and final reports of the accidents that caused serious damage.

JTSB has more independence, has improved its functions, actively performs appropriate the investigations of the accidents and suggestions for recurrence prevention measures.

