

Chapter 7 Building Foundations for Comfortable Living

1 Measures to Build Towns Comfortable for Persons with Disabilities and Measures for Safety and Security of Persons with Disabilities

The main concept of the “Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons” is universal design, as “Easy-to-use and free-to-use, for anyone in anywhere” This Act prescribes the obligation to conform to the “Basic Policy on Accessibility of Smooth Traveling and Others” in constructing new facilities (passenger facilities, vehicles, roads, off-street car park, urban parks, buildings and the like) and in other matters and obligations imposed on existing facilities to make an effort to conform to the Criteria based on the “Basic Policy on Facilitation of Smooth Traveling and Others” which specifies development goals up to the end of FY2020. The “Basic Plan on Transportation Policy” (endorsed by the Cabinet in February 2015) based on the “Basic Act on Transportation Policy” (Act No. 92 of 2013) also holds up further wider use of barrier-free designs as one of the goals. The promotion of barrier-free designs is pursued based on them.

Also, on the basis of the basic plans that municipalities create, prioritized and integrated adoption of barrier-free design is being promoted, and in order to arouse the “Mental Barrier-Free” and deepen public understanding of the promotion of adoption of barrier-free design and to ask for public cooperation in the promotion of the adoption of barrier-free design, “Barrier-free Lecture Class” are being held, which provide a chance to perform care for and experience a simulation of the life of persons including elderly persons and persons with disabilities, and step-by-step, continuous development of measures on barrier-free design is being promoted

[Main Measures]

- (1) As for all public housing, rental housing belonging to the Urban Renaissance Agency, improved housing, and rental housing belonging to public corporations that are newly constructed, it is specified that barrier-free design as a standard specification, and appropriate accommodation is to be provided according to the mental and physical characteristics of persons with disabilities. Also, existing housing is being rebuilt and improved to promote adoption of barrier-free design.
- (2) In order to form a housing stock considering the use of persons with disabilities, the points to consider in designing housings where they could continue to live even if body function lowers are presented, according to “Guideline on Designing Housing Where the Elderly People Live,” to promote the popularization of the housings considering also persons with disabilities.
- (3) In the Project for Promoting Renovation to Ensure Long-term High-quality Housing implemented with the FY2014 budget, support was provided for barrier-free designs in addition to the renovation to ensure long-term high-quality housing to promote barrier-free designs of housing.
- (4) The “Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled

Persons” requires that public transport, buildings, roads, off-street car park and urban parks are to conform the Barrier-free Standards and prescribes that adoption of barrier-free design in living spaces by improving facilities that persons including elderly persons and persons with disabilities use in their daily and social lives. The Act also prescribes that municipalities may specify certain areas as priority development areas where the smoothing of transportation is expected and create basic plans on the prioritized and integrated promotion of projects concerning smooth transportation. Also the Act creates a system to enable persons including elderly persons and persons with disabilities to concretely propose the details of basic plans with a view to promoting the efforts of municipalities to formulate these basic plans.

- (5) The “Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons” prescribes that it is the responsibility of the national government to further pursue the so-called “Mental Barrier-Free” to deepen public understanding of the promotion and ask for public cooperation in the implementation of barrier-free design. Also the Act prescribes that it shall be the responsibility of citizens not only to provide cooperation to enable persons including elderly persons and persons with disabilities to use facilities smoothly but also to deepen understanding of the importance of ensuring independent daily and social lives for elderly persons and persons with disabilities. In addition to this, the Act prescribes criteria including corridors, stairs of specified buildings for smooth use of persons with disabilities (Basic Policy on Accessibility of Smooth Traveling and Others) and an obligation for construction of special specified buildings larger than a certain size to be conformed to the said Criteria and provides for financial support for well-constructed buildings authorized by administrative agencies with jurisdiction on the basis of the said Act (authorized and specified buildings).
- (6) The “Graphical Symbols for Public Information (JISZ8210)” that define graphical symbols for public information were revised to add “symbols for priority facilities and priority seats” in July 2014. In September 2014, the JIS standard “Tsunami Evacuation Guidance - Safety Signing System” was established to define the matters to be considered when installing on the routes to evacuation shelters a series of signs that include information on the heights above sea level of the current positions and directions and distances to evacuation shelters to enable quick evacuation to safe places in emergency.
- (7) The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism is promoting efforts to provide ICT-assisted pedestrians mobility support toward the construction of a “Universal Society” in which all the persons including elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and tourists from abroad can acquire information on travel as required and live an active life. The guidelines (March 2014 version) that the local public entities and other organizations can easily examine for introduction were created based on the findings acquired from the local projects, etc. implemented in 14

locations in Japan from FY2011 to FY2013. Furthermore, the “Study Committee for Promoting ICT-assisted Pedestrian Movement Support” examined the matters required for full-scale promotion since June of the same year.

- (8) On the basis of the “Basic Plan for Tourism Nation Promotion” endorsed by the Cabinet in March 2012, the Japan Tourism Agency conducts efforts to strengthen regional systems for hosting travelers and discussions toward the promoting supply of universal traveling supplies in order to promote “Universal Tourism,” in which all persons including persons with disabilities can enjoy travel. The Agency created a manual that summarizes the procedures to enhance the regional systems for hosting tourists in FY2013 and created a case study manual that describes practical efforts to improve the regional systems for hosting tourists in FY2014.
- (9) The installation of barrier-free traffic signals is being promoted: Traffic signals that emit sound to indicate the state of the traffic signal; Traffic signals for pedestrians which indicate how much time remains until the light changes color on displays; and separate and independent traffic lights for vehicles and pedestrians, which prevent traffic accidents by separating the time for passage of pedestrians/bicycles and cars.
- (10) To ensure the secure driving of all the people including persons with disabilities, it has been decided to ensure the development of comfortable road structures, improvement of the visibility and prevention of driving with fatigue. Therefore, development of rest facilities including Michi-no-Eki, development of additional lanes (lanes to make way for other vehicles) and increase of more lighting are promoted. Moreover, installations of lavatories and parking spaces for persons with disabilities are implemented at service areas (SA) and parking areas (PA) on expressways and parking lots. Furthermore, employment of LED traffic lights, adoption of large and high luminance road signs, adoption of high luminance signs painted on roads, development of devices to provide traffic information and development of devices to provide road information including road information boards and information terminals and information communications infrastructure including fiber optic networks that support these devices are promoted.
- (11) To improve the convenience for applicants with physical disabilities who want to acquire driver’s licenses, installation of facilities including ramps and elevators in each prefectural police department’s testing centers for driver’s licenses is being attempted, and counseling on the acquisition of driver’s licenses is provided by setting up points of contact for driving aptitude counseling and allocating staff members who have considerable knowledge about the driving aptitudes of persons with physical disabilities.
- (12) Based on the lessons of the Great East Japan Earthquake, measures for “Persons Who Need Accommodation” including elderly persons, persons with disabilities and infants are becoming increasingly important. In FY2012, in order to promote the

participation of various bodies including organizations of elderly persons and persons with disabilities and reflect various opinions on regional disaster management programs, the “Act on the Partial Revision of the Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures” (Act No. 41 of 2012) was enacted, in which matters including the inclusion of persons who serve as members of voluntary disaster prevention organizations or academic experts as members of local disaster management councils are incorporated and the Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures was revised. In view of the remaining unsolved issues and the final report of the Planning Conferences on Promotion of Disaster Management Measures in July 2012, the government enacted the “Act on the Partial Revision of the Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures” (Act No. 54 of 2013)” in FY2013, including such provisions as obligating the heads of municipalities to make a list of persons who need special support in emergency evacuation behaviors among persons who need assistance and establishing criteria to be satisfied by evacuation centers that are expected to accommodate mainly persons who need assistance.

- (13) In response to the revision of the Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures, the “Guidelines on Support for Evacuation of Persons Who Need Protection in the Event of Disasters” (March 2006) was fully revised and the “Guidelines Relating to Support for Evacuation of Persons Who Need Support in Evacuation,” in which matters including specific procedures concerning the creation and utilization of lists of persons who need support in evacuation are incorporated, was formulated and publicized in August 2013.
- (14) In response to the sediment-related disaster due to torrential rain in Hiroshima in August 2014, the “Sediment Disaster Prevention Act” was partially amended and came into effect in January 2015. The revision was intended to enhance and strengthen the warning and evacuation system by, for example, having the local disaster management plans of municipalities identify the names and locations of facilities where people require special assistance (disabled, elderly, etc.) in the sediment-related disaster hazard areas.
- (15) According to the 2013 revision of the “Flood Fighting Act,” it was prescribed that in order to ensure prompt evacuation for users of facilities for the use of persons who need consideration (facilities mainly for the use of persons who especially need consideration in disaster prevention including elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and infants) in the event of floods, Municipality Disaster Prevention Councils shall specify methods for communicating information including flood forecasts for the owners and managers of the facilities for the use of persons who need accommodation in flood forecast areas designated by Regional Plans for Disaster Prevention in municipalities. In addition to this, it was prescribed that the obligation to make endeavors to prepare programs to ensure evacuation and other efforts shall be imposed on the owners and managers of the said facilities among other matters, which will strengthen flood management systems.

(16) Fire departments of Japan are working on fire safety measures in the specific fire prevention properties thoroughly as one of the priority goals through the nationwide fire prevention campaigns in spring and autumn. They are also working on fire safety measures in small social welfare facilities for people with disabilities by ensuring the adequate evacuation guidance system and confirming the compliance with Fire Protection and Prevention Act. Moreover, they created the guidelines for installation of visual alarm system that notifies hearing impaired persons of the occurrence of fire.

(17) Among the measures that were taken for disaster stricken areas and disaster victims in response to the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, the measures that have been implemented as a part of the support for persons with disabilities are mainly as follows (as of March 2014).

To persons with disabilities and businesses sectors that provide welfare services for persons with disabilities, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare gave notice of reduction and elimination of burden to users and flexible implementation of measures concerning the welfare services for persons with disabilities mentioned below.

① As for responses to users

- According to the Act Relating to Special Measures to Preserve Rights and Benefits of Disaster Victims of a Specified Emergency Disasters, deadlines for the determination of grants for nursing care payments was extended to February 28, 2013.
- It was decided that if municipalities eliminate the fees to users for welfare services for persons with disabilities ordinarily borne by affected persons with disabilities, the costs that would have been borne by users will be covered by the national government.

② As for provision of welfare services for persons with disabilities

- It was decided that reduction of fees are not to be carried out in cases where criteria for personnel distribution and criteria for the facilities and equipment have not been met, including cases where the capacity was temporarily exceeded at the time of acceptance of persons including disaster victims.
- Also, it was decided that in cases where as much support as possible including safety verification and consultation support is provided at places for evacuation of users due to unavoidable reasons, the fee payment is to be the same as it has been for welfare services for persons with disabilities in use so far.
- It was decided that in cases where home-help services are provided at shelters, the fee payment is also to be the same as for welfare services for persons with disabilities.
- Furthermore, it was decided that in cases where staff evacuate themselves to temporary facilities or other facilities together with users and provide welfare services for persons with disabilities there, the fee payment is also to be the same as for welfare services for persons with disabilities.

- ③ Dispatch of nursing care staff and acceptance of evacuees
- In cases where nursing care staff is short in each office, workers including nursing care staff have been dispatched from other offices in response to adjustments made by entities including the national government and prefectures.
 - Also, in cases where it is necessary for users to evacuate due to causes including suffering from disasters, entities including the national government and prefectures have made adjustments and ensured that there are places that accept the users.
- ④ As for support for resuming welfare services for persons with disabilities in disaster stricken areas
- Recovery support was provided by conducting recovery operations for affected support facilities for persons with disabilities that had suffered from the Earthquake Disaster and national subsidy projects relating to expenses required to resume operations.
 - In order for disability welfare service offices in disaster stricken areas that had been tremendously damaged to be able to provide stable service even during reconstruction, support bases were established in each disaster stricken prefecture, and budgetary measures were taken to assist in development toward the resumption of operations of offices including in-home nursing care offices and other projects work toward the measures mentioned below. The details of the measures are as follows:
 - a. Support for activities of job support offices for persons with disabilities (to ensure orders for operations, to rebuild channels of distribution and the like),
 - b. Support to ensure manpower including human resources for welfare,
 - c. Support to understand and utilize services of new systems under the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act and the Child Welfare Act,
 - d. Support for the launching of basic consultation support centers according to the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act and
 - e. Support for the use of welfare services for persons with disabilities based on the needs of children, persons with developmental disorders

Also, as for mental health care, on the basis of the Disaster Relief Act, “Mental Health Care Teams” where about 4 or 5 persons including psychiatrists, nurses, and psychiatric social workers are serving as members performed rounds in shelters in cooperation with public health nurses in municipalities and the like.

Because it is expected that symptoms of PTSD could be prolonged and the number of persons with depression or anxiety disorder could increase even after disaster victims are moved to temporary housing or their own houses, “Mental Health care Centers” have been established in the prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima and are offering consultation support for persons who need mental health care through cooperation between health-care centers/municipalities and professionals including nurses, psychiatric social workers and clinical psychotherapists who provide mental health care continuously and for long periods.

In order to smoothly support persons with developmental disorders, the

Information and Support Center for Persons with Developmental Disorders, established by the National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities, provided information including cautions in providing support in disaster-stricken areas for persons who treat persons with developmental disorders, immediately after the Earthquake Disaster. Also, the Information and Support Center created booklets that summarize necessary responses in the event of disasters to familiarize people with them.

While, as for job assistance, at the end of March 2011, “Earthquake Disaster Special Counseling Points of Contact” were set up in Public Employment Security Offices and were providing services including vocational counseling for all the disaster victims. Also, in addition to this, “Special Counseling Points of Contact” have been set up in Regional Vocational Centers for Persons with Disabilities and have been providing fine-tuned support including job coaching support and on-site counseling since April of the same year. Furthermore, since May of the same year, if one’s needs for a job are understood in on-site counseling in places including shelters set up by the Public Employment Security Offices, the Regional Vocational Centers for Persons with Disabilities has been providing visiting counseling.

In order to ensure the educational opportunities of young students including young students with disabilities, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) provides support for school attendance in order to ensure the educational opportunities of young students including those with disabilities and encourages each Prefectural Board of Education to accept affected young students into local schools.

Furthermore, MEXT is endeavoring to ensure support for school attendance for young students with disabilities through financial measures regarding expenses to provide support for school attendance to young students in schools for special needs education and classes for special needs education, who came to have difficulty in attending school due to the Earthquake Disaster, expenses for the emergency dispatch of professionals including school counselors for the purpose of enhancing mental health care for persons including affected young students, and expenses for the utilization of outside experts who endeavor to enhance learning activities at schools for special needs education.

The National Institute of Special Needs Education (NISE) created the “Handbook for Teachers who Support Children after the Earthquake Disaster -with a focus on treatment of children with developmental disabilities-”, distributes the handbook to agencies concerned and has posted the handbook on its website (<http://www.nise.go.jp/cms/6,3758,53.html>).

MEXT and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare are requesting each Prefectural Board of Education and Management Division of Welfare for Children with Disabilities to gain an understanding of the situations of affected young students with disabilities and support them, to pursue cooperation between education and welfare agencies including cases where if entities such as Boards of Education and schools find young students who need support, the entities are to

contact Management Divisions of Welfare for Children with Disabilities in municipalities after ascertaining the wishes of their parents or guardians, and to disseminate information with the points of contact relating to support for children with disabilities.

- (18) Because persons with disabilities have particular difficulty in taking adequate measures for crime prevention that are necessary for ordinary persons and they are at high risk of suffering from crime or accidents and have severe feelings of anxiety, in order to resolve the difficulties that occur when persons with disabilities try to contact the police, every prefectural police department is accepting emergency notifications by fax and e-mail (the Japanese emergency police telephone number 110, for fax and e-mail), providing information over fax networks and promoting installation of ramps in facilities including police boxes and the like.
- (19) In order to remove the feelings of anxiety that plague persons with disabilities when they think of suffering from crime or accidents, entities including the police provide counseling for persons with disabilities and comply with the requests of persons with disabilities and are making efforts to provide information necessary to ensure their safety including crime incidents and accidents in their vicinity and know-how on crime prevention. Also, the police are publicizing and disseminating a “List of High-Performance Building Components for Crime-Prevention” that lists building components expected to be very effective as measures against break-ins and are giving guidance to incorporated public interest association Japan Security Systems Association in order to have the Association endeavor to disseminate crime-prevention systems for persons with disabilities that are safe and highly reliable. The said Association performs activities including the introduction of devices designed for persons with disabilities in its guide on home security.

2 Measures to Enhance Information Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

In order to expand the opportunities for persons with disabilities to use and utilize information communication technology, research and development on information communication devices and systems for the easy to use by persons with disabilities are being promoted and accessibility guidelines are being formulated, promoted and disseminated to make telecommunications equipment conform to JIS and international standards in terms of accessibility.

Also, barrier-free websites are being promoted and information communication systems that support the social participation of persons with disabilities are being developed and disseminated; in addition to this, information provision is being enhanced by developing information networks and creating closed-captioned videos, braille versions of pamphlets and the like and communication support systems are being enhanced by employing sign language, translation into braille and the like.

[Main Measures]

- (1) Community Life Support Services operate IT support centers for persons with disabilities, which are to be bases for comprehensive services for measures relevant to IT, and “Projects on Comprehensive Promotion of IT for Persons with Disabilities,” which implement measures relevant to IT, including training and dispatching volunteers to teach about computers comprehensively and systematically are being conducted.
- (2) Since teleworking is a way of working that enables workers to be flexible in terms of workplace and working hours utilizing ICT (Information Communication Technology), it is expected that teleworking will contribute to the expansion of job opportunities for persons including women, elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Teleworking is helpful for the creation of job opportunities for persons who want to work in various styles, and the enhancement of regional vitality. Therefore, the government will promote the development of appropriate work environments as well as dissemination and enlightenment awareness-raising toward further expansion of teleworking through cooperation among the relevant ministries. In order to disseminate teleworking in earnest, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications dispatched experts to private companies to work toward the introduction and implementation of teleworking and formulated good examples of the introduction of teleworking through these efforts. Furthermore, seminars were held throughout the country to disseminate teleworking.
- (3) As for national elections, by the 2003 revision of the Public Offices Election Act, the scope of persons who can vote by means including mail was extended and a system to fill out voting papers using a scribe was created. In addition to these, accommodations necessary for persons with disabilities to vote are being provided through the preparation of “Lists of Candidates and Numbered Lists of Political Parties” printed in braille at facilities including polls, efforts to indicate types of elections in braille on voting papers, provision of candidate information by a braille version and audio version recorded on cassette tape and compact disc, installation of slope for wheelchairs, and braille device at polls. Regarding election candidates’ broadcasts, the following efforts are being made: For proportional representation elections for the House of Representatives and prefectural governor elections, sign language interpretation can be added; For proportional representation elections for the House of Councilors, sign language interpretation and subtitles can be added; For single-seat constituency elections for the House of Representatives, video messages created by political parties can be broadcast as election candidates’ broadcasts, to which sign language interpretation and subtitles can be added according to the decision of the political parties.
- (4) When persons with visual or hearing disabilities acquire information through broadcasts and participate in society, the dissemination of closed-captioned broadcasting, audio descriptions and sign language broadcasting comes to be an

important issue and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) is promoting the dissemination of these methods of broadcasting. Furthermore, MIC had held “the Investigative Commission for Subtitles in the Age of Smart TV” since January 2014 to discuss specific plans toward the dissemination of subtitled TV commercial messages, etc. and disclosed a report to the public in July 2014. In response to the report, the “Council for Promotion of Subtitled TVCM ” was established in October of the same year for promoting subtitled TV commercial messages, and it has been making the efforts such as seminars for raising awareness for promotion and facilitating the dissemination of subtitled TV commercial messages.

- (5) In response to needs of persons with visual disabilities for improvements, the Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the National Printing Bureau and the Bank of Japan, made “Efforts to Enhance Identifiability for Each Type of Bank of Japan Notes” public on April 26, 2013 in order to make the current banknotes easier to use.
- (6) Among Community Life Support Services, communication support projects that provide for the dispatch and assignment of workers including sign language interpreters and support through translation into braille, voice interpretation, and the like for persons who have difficulty in communicating due to disabilities relating to hearing, language function, speech function, vision, and training for braille translation workers, workers to read texts, workers who write summaries, sign language workers, and sign language interpreters are being conducted. As for the Community Life Support Services prescribed by the “Act on Comprehensive Support for Persons with Disabilities,” which became effective in April 2013, it was prescribed that provision of training for sign language interpreters, workers who write summaries, interpretation and assistance workers for persons with visual or hearing disabilities shall be an essential item of business for prefectures. In terms of how these workers are to be dispatched, it was prescribed that if municipalities fail to dispatch such workers, prefectures shall dispatch them, to strengthen support for communication.
- (7) Each prefectural police department is making efforts to utilize closed-captioned training movies and ensure the presence of sign language interpreters for hearing impaired persons, and in order to facilitate the communication between persons who find difficulties in communicating with language and police officers, “Communication Support Boards” donated by cooperating group are distributed and used in police boxes, patrol cars and the like.