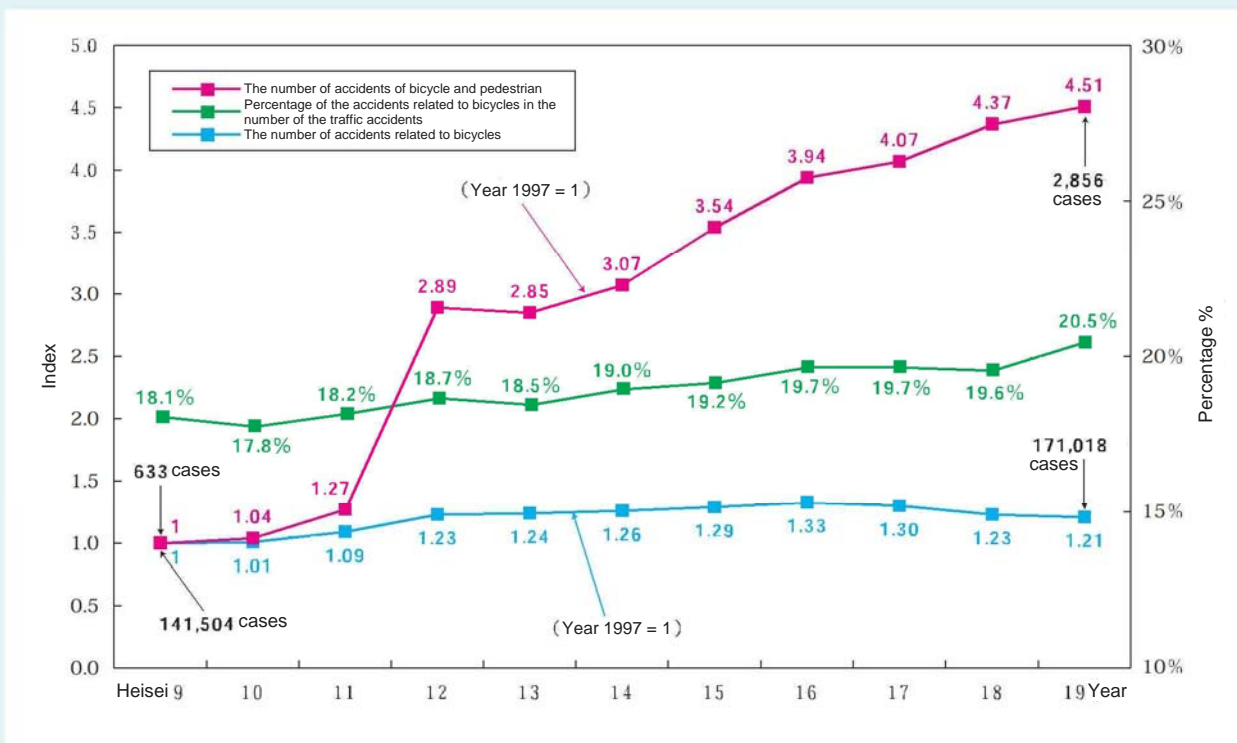


Efforts for Safe Use of Bicycles

Though the bicycle is widely used by various user classes as a national transportation means, the number of bicycle-related accidents in 2007 was 171,018. This figure accounted for 20.5% of total number of traffic accidents and had increased 1.2 times from 10 years earlier. It was noticed that rules were not being followed such as disorderly bicycles on sidewalks, etc. The accident cases of bicycles and pedestrians totaled 2,856, which was a 4.5 time increase from 10 years earlier.

In June 2007, in order to bring order to the bicycle traffic, the Road Traffic Act was revised, approved and came into effect with clarifications on the restrictions on riding bicycles on sidewalks. This clarification was made with the goal of making the rules regarding bicycles usage easy to apply so that they can be effective. In the Transport Headquarters for the Central Traffic Safety Measures Council (general manager: specially assigned minister of the Cabinet Office, member: relevant Administrative Vice-Ministers), the “In Relation to Promotion of Safe Usage of Bicycles” was decided, and the entire government was engaged in keeping everyone informed about the bicycle traffic rules and to improve the traffic environment.

Situation of the number of bicycle related accidents



Note: Source: National Police Agency

[1] Improvement of bicycle traffic environment

It is necessary to systematically implement hard measures and traffic regulation to secure a bicycle traffic space in order to advance the improvement of the bicycle traffic environment for both pedestrians and bicycles nationwide. In January 2008, the National Police Agency and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism specified the bicycle traffic environment improvement model area in 98 places over the country. In these model districts, a project for bicycle traffic environment that can be examples in the future by producing bicycle paths and a space on the street exclusively for bicycles within approximately two years.

In order to secure the road space that can be used safely by pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles, a pilot program was carried out on a trial basis in cooperation with the Sugunami Ward in Tokyo. This



Nakasugi Avenue: Bicycle path community experimental result report

Source: Youth/Public Safety Measures Department (Tokyo) Bureau of Urban Development (Suginami Ward)

was done to improve the running space for bicycles using existing road space. Its effectiveness and possible application was analyzed and traffic rules and manners for bicycle riders were promoted.

[2] Knowledge of rules for bicycle riders

The police explain bicycle traffic rules to wide variety of bicycle riders like children, students, senior citizens, housewives, etc. and also explain the “Rules Related to Traffic Methods” and the “5 Rules for Safe Use of Bicycles” decided by the Transport Measures Headquarter in cooperation with the local authorities, schools and bicycle related businesses.

As for the “Rules Related to Traffic Methods”, the part related to bicycle was widely revised in April 2008 on the basis of the revision of Road Traffic Act and expert opinions. It included the sideway usage regulations for normal bicycles And the rules that must be known by every citizen such as that children must wear a helmet, the prohibition of riding a bicycle with one hand while talking on cell phones and wearing headphones etc., were clarified in the current law.

Further, though riding with two children is not permitted in Road Traffic Act and Prefectural Public Safety Commission's rules, it is a social demand to include it as a mode of transportation by guardians raising children. The Exploratory Committee is established by the experts of the National Police Agency to examine the required conditions for bicycles to ride with two children, development possibility and necessary particulars for dissemination of safe use.

5 rules for safe use of bicycle

- 1 Roadways should be used to ride bicycles (use sidewalk exceptionally)
- 2 The left side of roadways should be used to ride bicycles.
- 3 Priority should be given to pedestrians using sidewalks and riding bicycles slowly near roadways.
- 4 Obey safety rules
 - Drunken driving, double ride and riding a bicycle with another person on a bicycle next to you is prohibited
 - Light should be on during night time
 - Signal at the crossing should be followed and safety at temporary stop should be confirmed.
- 5 Children should wear helmets.

[3] Promotion of bicycle safety education

Bicycle safety education for elementary, junior and senior high school students is promoted in cooperation with the police and schools.

Educational content is improved by implementing “Educational Model Projects Related to Bicycle Safe Usage for Junior and Senior High School Students” and by creating effective educational material, and bicycle class for elementary, junior and senior high school students and senior citizens is held throughout the country.

Moreover, efforts are being made to spread the bicycle traffic rules and the knowledge about what to be done to secure bicycle safety through the seminars for the licensed drivers at the time of renewal of license.



Holding a bicycle class

[4] Strengthening of guidance for bicycle rider's traffic violation

The guidance and warning for bicycle rider's traffic violation is strengthened and malicious/dangerous traffic violation that caused concrete risk for the traffic and for pedestrians is repeated after given a warning, the guidance makes strict measures such as an arrest measure to issue a traffic ticket. Moreover, 1,735 places are specified nationwide for the bicycle guidance promotion emphasis area and route. The guidance and warning activities for bicycle riders on roads are promoted in cooperation with volunteers from the regional traffic safety activity promotion committee and local residents.



Road guidance of bicycle traffic rules for high school students