

Emergency Joint Inspection of School-commuting Roads

Following a series of accidents occurred in a row in April 2012 in which pupils on their way to and from school got killed and injured including the accident that occurred at Kameoka city in Kyoto, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and the National Police Agency are promoting measures jointly to ensure traffic safety in school-commuting roads.

Holding of Meeting of Deputy Ministers of Relevant Ministries

On May 28, 2012, a meeting of deputy ministers of the ministries cited above was held and it was decided to implement the following efforts in order to ensure traffic safety in school-commuting roads.

- ① “Strengthening of collaboration at the national level”
Further strengthening of coordination among Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and National Police Agency
- ② “Development of coordination systems by relevant community level organizations”
Development of coordination systems among education boards, road administrators, police-related institutions, parents, community people and others.
- ③ “Implementation of Emergency Joint Inspection”
Review of measures following the implementation and the results of emergency joint inspection of school coordinated by relevant organizations in collaboration with parent as well as community people.

Implementation of Emergency Joint Inspection to Ensure Traffic Safety in School-commuting Roads

Following the decision adopted at the meeting of deputy ministers of the ministries, emergency joint inspection was carried out by schools, education boards, road administrators, and the police in collaboration with parent as well as community people since the end of May, 2012 targeting approximately 20,000 school-commuting roads across the country.

As a result, it was reported that there are 74,483 places which need to be taken any measures as at the end of November 2012 and schools, education boards, road administrators, and the police are promoting the implementation of necessary measures starting with those which are readily available.

These include for example, change of routes to and from schools, vigilance in school zones and others implemented by schools, development of sidewalks, expansion of road shoulders and others implemented by road administrators, and installation of new traffic lights, crosswalks and others by the police.



Emergency Joint Inspection

[Information on the topic is available on the website of the government]

Information on the notification issued by the government for the implementation of Emergency Joint Inspection is available on:

http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kenko/anzen/1321774.htm

Information on the current status of efforts on Emergency Joint Inspection of school roads is available on:

<http://www.mlit.go.jp/road/sesaku/tsugakuro.html>

Holding of discussion sessions with experts for ensuring traffic safety on school roads

Discussion sessions with experts for ensuring traffic safety on school-commuting roads were held in three occasions between June and July 2012 in order to discuss measures and a variety of opinions was offered from the perspectives such as “improvement of road traffic environment,” “ensuring safety of the overall community through the coordination and cooperation among interested organizations,” and “promotion of traffic safety education in an effective manner” among others for promoting measures to ensure safety.”

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and National Policy Agency published the main points in the discussion sessions and provided them to the interested organizations of all the prefectures.

[Information on the topic is available on the website of the government]

Information on the opinions wrapped up in the discussion session of experts is available on:
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/sports/014/attach/1324642.htm

System for the Grant of Driving License for Persons with Illness with Certain Symptoms

Many people got killed and injured in 2 separate traffic accidents. One occurred in Kanuma city, Tochigi prefecture in April 2011 and another occurred in Kyoto city, Kyoto prefecture in April 2012. It is known that these accidents were caused by persons who renewed their driving licenses without reporting that they had a condition that causes seizures with impairment of consciousness. In addition, a petition was presented to the commissioner of the National Public Safety Commission by the “Bereaved Families of 6 Children who were killed in a Crane Crash Accident” demanding a review of driving license system in April 2012 and a total of about 200,000 signatures was presented in 2 separate occasions, in April and August of the same year.

In consideration of these circumstances, the National Policy Agency set up a review committee made up by experts to review the issue of driving license for people with certain symptoms between June and October of the same year with a view to looking at ways to recognize persons with certain symptoms and developing environment which helps persons with certain symptoms declare the illness in a voluntary manner.

List of Members of the Review Committee

	Name	Professional affiliation
Chairman	Shizuo Fujiwara	Professor, Chuo University Graduate School of Law
Member	Emiko Okubo	Commissioner, Victim Support Center of Tokyo
	Mitsue Kimura	Professor, Tokyo Metropolitan University Law School
	Kiyoshi Komoda	Automobile critic
	Toshihito Takashiba	Lawyer
	Sadatoshi Tsuji	Professor, University of Occupational and Environmental Health, Japan
	Tamao Hosokawa	Political journalist
	Yuji Mikami	Executive director, Japan Medical Association

* The professional affiliation is at the time of the review meetings (by Japanese syllabary order)

The “Recommendations on Systems for the Grant of Driving License for Persons with Illness with Certain Symptoms” was wrapped up by this review committee and the direction to review the current system for the grant of driving license was shown. Following these recommendations, the National Police Agency has started to take necessary measures for the revision of the system for the grant of driving license including a revision of the Road Traffic Act.

[Information on the topic is available on the website of the government]

Overview and materials of the discussions at the Expert Review Committee are available on:
<http://www.npa.go.jp/koutsuu/index.htm>

Status of Review in Expert Review Committee over the Issue of Driving License for Persons with Illness with Certain Symptoms

1st meeting (June 5, 2012)

- Staff of the Ministry explained the current status of the system for the granting of driving license for persons with certain types of illness.
- Staff of the Ministry explained the occurrence status of accidents due to certain types of illness.
- Hearing was conducted with interested bodies (“Bereaved Families of 6 Children who were killed in a Crane Crash Accident” and “Japan Epilepsy Association”).

2nd meeting (June 26, 2012)

- In respect of measures to assure declaration of illness and others
 - Points regarding on measures to recognize persons with certain symptoms in an appropriate manner (process for gaining an understanding by way of voluntary declaration)
 - Points regarding measures to develop an environment to help persons with certain symptoms declare the illness in an easy manner.
 - System for the granting of driving license for persons with certain types of illness in foreign countries (voluntary declaration system)

* In addition, hearing was conducted with relevant academic societies and patient groups in August and September.

3rd meeting (July 26, 2012)

- Sharing of information between relevant organizations and government agencies
 - Points regarding measures to recognize persons with certain symptoms in a secure manner (process for recognizing other than voluntary report)
 - System for the granting of driving license for persons with certain types of illness in foreign countries (voluntary declaration system)

4th meeting (August 28, 2012)

- Ways to deal with the issue until medical conditions are determined
- Matters which need to be improved for the management of system

5th meeting (September 19, 2012)

- Deliberations on recommendations
- Staff of the Ministry explained the implementation status of hearing with relevant associations.

6th meeting (October 16, 2012)

- Wrapping up the recommendations
- Staff of the Ministry explained the results of the hearings with relevant academic societies

Summary of the Recommendations on Systems for the Grant of Driving License for Persons with Illness with Certain Symptoms

Measures to recognize persons with certain symptoms in an appropriate manner

- Development of penal provisions on a false declaration of illness etc.

Conclusion: It is necessary to develop penal provisions for persons who made a false declaration of symptoms which affect driving performance.

A false declaration of symptoms leads to the grant of license to persons without the aptitude for driving and may cause grave accidents. In light of this fact, while it is necessary to punish a false declaration (balance with those who made a correct declaration, power of dissuasion), it is necessary to provide measures to:

- Prevent the spread of discrimination
- Prevent indiscriminate spread of persons to be punished.
- Process for recognizing by way other than voluntary report

Conclusion: It is necessary to develop a system whereby when the symptom of a patient is recognized to affect the safe driving of a vehicle, his/her doctor reports about the case on an arbitrary basis according to his/her judgment.

 - When it is made compulsory for doctors to report:
 - It may happen that patients refuse to see doctors due to loss of trust between them and the problem is not exposed.
 - Because of difficulties of diagnosis, a doctor may refuse to see the subject patient.
 - As it may happen that patients who are lawfully allowed to drive may be reported also, it is necessary to develop such an environment where doctors are allowed to report a possible case in an arbitrary/discretionary manner and to this end, it is adequate that laws are provided taking into consideration the relationship of trust between doctors and patient and in compliance with confidentiality rules and Personal Information Protection Act.
 - When it is made arbitrary/discretionary, it will be necessary for medical associations and others to develop a guideline to secure the viability of the system.

Ways for the development of an environment which allows persons with certain symptoms to make correct report

Conclusion: It is necessary to reduce the burden of those who have been deprived of their license because of illness when they apply for a new license, such as exemption of a part of the test etc.

In consideration of the particularity that those who have been deprived of their license are not to blame, it is recommended to encourage them to make correct report by reducing their burden including the exemption both the paper test and practice test.

Ways to deal with the driving license until medical conditions are determined

Conclusion: When a reasonable doubt exists about persons in illness with certain symptoms based on objective facts, their license must be provisionally invalidated.

This is necessary to ensure road traffic safety.

These objective facts must be limited to the past history of accidents so that the decision may not constitute a profit infringement.

Others

- It is necessary to create database of traffic accident information including traffic accidents resulting in property damage.
- It is inadequate to require the submission of a medical certificate at the time of application and renewal.

Enhancement of Safety Measures in the Wake of Highway Tour Bus Accident

A serious traffic accident occurred on the Kanetsu Highway on April 29, 2012, when a highway tour bus* with 45 passengers on the bus crashed into the left side of the road. As a result of the impact, 7 people got killed and 38 people got injured. Following the accident, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism set up an accident task force to collect information and as an emergency measure enforced clarification and more strict application of the criteria on the need to put in place a replacement driver to prevent a drivers from overworking. In addition, following the review results of expert meetings, the Ministry decided to implement the “plan to restore security and safety of highway and chartered bus” for 2 years temporarily until the end of FY 2014.

Main content of the “plan to restore security and safety of highway and chartered bus”

- (1) Unification into a new highway passenger bus system
The present highway tour bus must be shifted to and enrolled in a new highway passenger bus system and operated by its operator and it must cease to operate as a highway tour bus from August. In addition, the operator who has shifted to the new system must complete the checking of its safety management system and law compliance status in order to fully ensure safe operations in an integrated manner.
- (2) Improvement of safety of chartered bus
 - ① Enhancement of safety check of the operators
 - Those operators who apply for license for chartered bus business should be subjected to the examination for safety based on on-site inspection of facilities such as offices, garages and others.
 - During the implementation period of the present plan, operators themselves must inspect the law compliance status on operation time and others in order to raise awareness of the need of complying with laws and report the inspection results to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. The Ministry on its part provides guidance based on said results. (Exemption of inspection for highly compliant business operators is also provided.)
 - Focused audit and inspection shall be conducted against aggravated business operators and strict punishment such as suspension of the business and others shall be given.
 - ② Enforcement of business operations focused on safety
In order to build safety management system where all personnel in the business activity need to be involved, the implementation of the transport safety management will be made compulsory to all chartered bus operators including small and medium operators within a year and an operation control system whereby operation administrators will responsibly determine the continuation, suspension, etc. of the service when the safe operation cannot be guaranteed due to the changes in the physical conditions of the driver after starting the service.
 - ③ Optimization and improvement of business environment
A new fare and fee system which is easy to understand and in which safety cost is reflected in an adequate manner will be introduced within a year after the introduction of the plan and its compliance status will be monitored through the enforcement of documented transactions

[Information on the topic is available on the website of the government]

Information on “plan to restore security and safety of highway and chartered bus” is available on:
<http://www.mlit.go.jp/common/000993596.pdf>

Other emergency measures implemented so far

After the accident, as a measure to take before the start of the high season in summer, the Ministry implemented the “plan to restore security and safety of highway and chartered bus” in June 2012 and implemented the following emergency measures (starting from July 2012).

* Highway tour bus

Travel business operators use a chartered bus to provide the same service as that of a highway passenger bus as a part of travel goods.

Enforcement of full compliance of laws and elimination of aggravated operators

Emergency audit and inspection was conducted on all the chartered bus operators and a list of aggravated business operators was published according to its result.

Prevention of overwork drive

The “Standards for the deployment of replacement drivers” which provides the limits for the driving duration and distance of a driver have been formulated for highway bus operators that provide long-distance and night-time operations.



(*) Implementation of simultaneous inspection to check the compliance status of the standards

Improvement in business environment of travel business operators and chartered bus operators

In order to ensure the clarification and fair dealing between travel business operators and chartered bus operators, it has been made compulsory for both of them to prepare and keep documents concerning transportations.

Provision of information to user

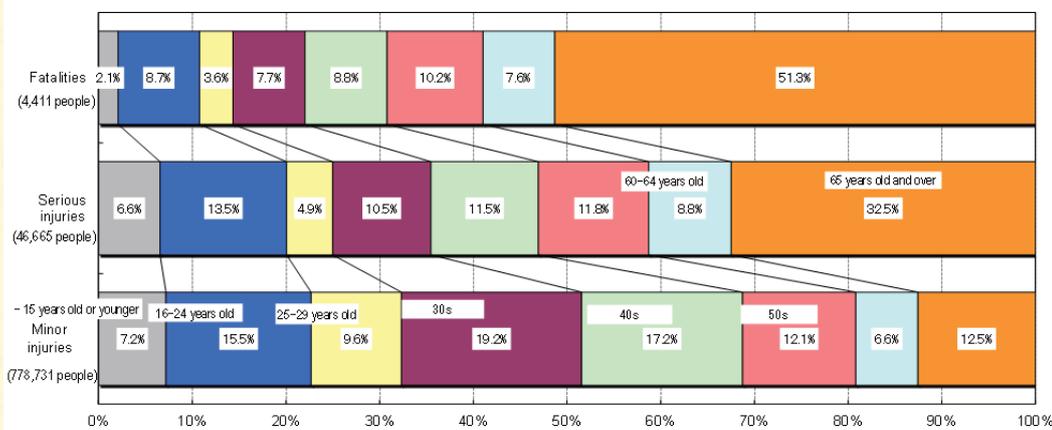
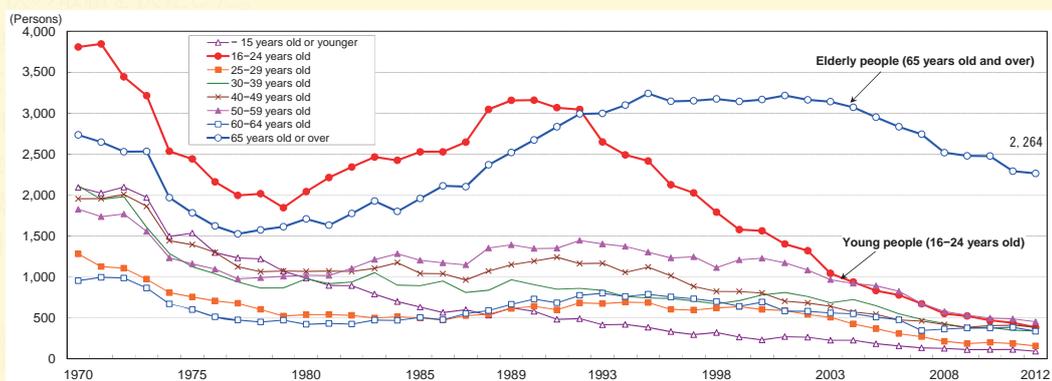
The “Highway bus display guideline” was prepared to develop an environment to allow users to select an appropriate highway bus and guidance is being provided to business operators and bus operators to provide information on the difference between a highway passenger bus and a highway tour bus, availability of a replacement driver and others so that users may check the safety of the operators.



(*2) Example of display in compliance with the display guideline

Measures for Traffic Safety for the Elderly

In recent years, the number of traffic accidents and casualties in Japan is in a declining trend as a whole. In the meantime, although the number of fatalities of the elderly of over 65 years old is declining, its declining rate is relatively small over the whole. In fact, the number of the elderly accounted for half of the total in 2012 and the number of fatalities of the elderly in traffic accidents is in an increasing trend. The government has promoted a variety of traffic safety measures for the elderly based on the “Comprehensive measures for traffic safety for the elderly in face of the full-scale aging society” (decision by Central Traffic Safety Policy Council on March 27, 2003) so far and is studying further measures to take. As it is expected that our aging society will progress further, it is necessary to provide efforts to further ensure traffic safety for the elderly.



PR and enlightenment activities of the government

In the Nationwide Traffic Safety Campaign in spring and autumn, dissemination and enlightenment activities are developed across the country focused on the “prevention of traffic accidents of children and the elderly.” In addition, the “Traffic Safety Forum”^{*} event has been held across Japan since 1981 aimed at raising awareness of traffic safety in people. In the forum held in Kashihara city in Nara prefecture in November 2012, Mr. Haruo Suzuki, honorary professor of Chiba University who is distinguished for his knowledge of traffic accidents of the elderly pointed out that many traffic accidents were caused in recent years due to causes related to mental and physical behavioral characteristics of the elderly and thus it is necessary to take accident prevention measures focused on these elderly-specific characteristics in order to reduce accidents of the elderly which account for half of the total. In the panel discussion after his speech, it was confirmed again that wearing a reflective material is an effective manner to reduce accidents at night which account for a large portion of the accidents of the elderly. Discussions were also

^{*} “Traffic Safety Symposium” until 2009.



[Poster of the Traffic Safety Forum of 2012]



[From the government internet TV broadcast]

made on the development of attractive reflective materials and the manner to disseminate them in an effective manner from various points of view and recommendations were made.

Furthermore, audio PR CDs were prepared for hearing impaired people and the program “Japan you want to know by Tokumitsu and Kisa! – Let’s reduce traffic accidents of the elderly based on the efforts of everybody-” was broadcast on the government internet TV inviting the professor Haruo Suzuki. Not only that the current status of traffic accidents of the elderly, measures to prevent traffic accidents and physical characteristics of the elderly were presented in the program, but also that the importance of providing measures for safety and being vigilant on the elderly was stressed.

Seminars and courses for the elderly

The National Police Agency implements measures aimed at providing safe and smooth transit of elderly people. The Agency also promotes the introduction of LED traffic lights and high intensity roads signs to cope with the increase in the number of elderly drivers. In addition, barrier-free traffic lights with functions to ensure safety when crossing the road are being developed on those roads which play a key role in the daily life of residents within the key improvement areas under the Barrier-Free Transportation Act (Title 1, Part 1, Chapter 2, Section 1-2).

Seminars are provided for elderly drivers according to their driving characteristics and the characteristics of their accidents in seminars and courses for the elderly when renewing their license (Title 1, Part 1, Chapter 2, Section 3-2).

Furthermore, in addition to providing individual guidance to the elderly without any opportunity of receiving traffic safety education by visiting their home, traffic safety education based on participation, experience and practice is actively promoted (Title 1, Part 1, Chapter 2, and Section 2-1).

(Case)

The Hiroshima Prefectural Police conducts the “elderly driver dock,” a practical training course using an instructor car in driving schools where a policeman sits in the passenger’s seat beside an elderly driver and points out operational problems and points to bear in mind giving specific guidance.



[Practical training for the elderly]

Performance standards of vehicle

In order to reduce the number of fatalities of pedestrians who collide with a car, a new standard on the performance of the car bonnet to protect pedestrian was introduced in September 2005. Furthermore, in order to reduce the number of serious injury accidents, a new standard on the performance of the car bumper was introduced in April 2013. In addition, information is provided to users by conducting evaluation tests in car assessment on the performance of the car bonnet and the car bumper to protect pedestrians.



Evaluation of the performance of the car bonnet to protect pedestrians



Evaluation of the performance of the car bumper to protect pedestrians

Other efforts

[Efforts of other ministries]

In addition, other ministries implement a variety of measures. As a part of its regional development project for community development based on the universal design as an independent project of the respective region, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, for example, develops an environment to allow the elderly to transit safely. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology makes efforts to raise awareness and interest of children for traffic safety and help acquaint them with the behavioral characteristics of the elderly who are liable to be victims of traffic accidents, and instructs schools through the respective board of education on the need to promote traffic safety education based on exchanges between the elderly and children.