

Chapter 5 Building Foundation of Quality of the Environment

1. Measures for Building a Town Where is Livable for Persons with Disabilities

In order to build a living environment considering “universal design,” the design that is comfortable and livable for anyone, we are promoting barrier-free for life space like housings, buildings, public transportation and pedestrian space to facilitate the integrated and continuous barrier-free of these facilities and others in a certain area, and the route within the facilities.

Also promoting is fine-tuned countermeasures giving consideration to persons who need support at the time of disaster in many different aspects of disaster prevention, such as dissemination of knowledge about disaster prevention, providing the information at the time of disaster, evacuation guidance and others.

On the other hand, along with promoting anticrime measures considering to the feelings of persons with disabilities, the measures for removing the difficulties when contacting to the police, and for preventing persons with disabilities from being involved in crimes and accidents are being promoted.

【Main measures】

- 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.
- Japan Housing Finance Agency decreases interest on financing for housing that is superior barrier-free and the like, according to Flat 35S, the Securitization support business.
- According to “Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc. of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc.” based on the idea of universal design declaring “Easy-to-use and free-to-use, for anyone in anywhere,” it is prescribed that when newly building facilities (passenger facilities, vehicles, roads, outside parking places, city parks, buildings and others), you must be obliged to conform to “Basic Policy on Accessibility of Smooth Traveling and Others,” and for existing facilities, must try to conform to this standard, and in “Basic Policy on Facilitation of Smooth Traveling and Others,” the goal for establishment until FY2020 has been determined to promote barrier-free.
- In order to realize a “Mental barrier-free” society that each and every individual in the country recognizes the difficulties of the elderly people and persons with disabilities as his/her own problem, and cooperate actively for their social participation, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism gives a barrier-free lecture class.
- National Police Agency and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism are promoting “Concept of Omnibus Town” providing support for the efforts of municipalities and authorities concerned which aim at building a town where social meaning of bus will be maximized. They are promoting the

improvement of convenience of bus, such as introduction of non-step bus, bus with lift and others considering to persons with disabilities, or people whose traveling is restricted, and improvement of bus stops. As of end of FY2011, 14 cities have been designated as omnibus town.

- Japan Tourism Agency has deliberated to establish and familiarize universal tourism that anyone can participate at ease.
- The Police are performing public relations and enlightenment activities about hearing-impaired markers. They are, in cooperation with concerned bodies, improving the lessons hearing-impaired drivers receive when they obtain and renew their driver's licenses and working on safety driving lessons on what non-disabled drivers have to care about so that hearing-impaired persons can drive a car safely.
- Since in disaster prevention countermeasure, the measures considering to the elderly people, persons with disabilities and foreign residents, or "People who need support at the time of disaster" is getting more important, "Amendment bill of Basic Act for Disaster Countermeasures" has been endorsed by the Cabinet in April, 2013, in which prescribed is that municipalities shall make a list of people who need support at the time of disaster, and particularly need the supports for smooth and rapid evacuation when the disaster occurs, and shall provide it to parties concerned like caseworker and fire station in advance, with their consent, and when making a list the required personal information shall be able to use.
- "Study Panel of Support for Evacuation of People who Need Support at the Time of Disaster" of academic experts and the parties took place five times, for months from October, 2012 to March, 2013, and deliberated about what should be included in "Guideline of Evacuation Support of People who need support at the time of disaster" (March, 2006) when reviewing it.

(Main urgent supports for persons with disabilities who were hit by the East Japan Great Earthquake)

When the Great East Japan Earthquake struck on 11th March, 2011, the measures that were taken for disaster areas and victims and have been implementing as a support for persons with disabilities are as follows;

- Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare issued a notice for persons with disabilities and business owners providing welfare services for persons with disabilities that exempting user charge and the measures for welfare services for persons with disabilities mentioned below should be conducted flexibly.
- 1) Response to users
 - According to the law relating to special measures to maintain rights and benefits of disaster victims of designated emergency disaster, due date of determination of payment of nursing-care insurance was extended to 28th February, 2013.

- When municipalities exempt user charge like welfare services for persons with disabilities relating to persons with disabilities who had been struck by the Earthquake, all of this charge will be financially supported by the government.
- 2) Providing welfare services for persons with disabilities
 - Even when facilities don't meet staffing standard and facility equipment standard, including when the capacity exceeds the fixed number temporarily as disaster victims are accepted, the benefit shall not be reduced.
 - Or when as much supports as possible, such as safety confirmation, counseling support and others, are offered at a safe haven of users due to inevitable reason, it shall be regarded as conventional welfare service for persons with disabilities, and shall be covered by benefits.
 - Even when home helper service is provided in a safe haven, it shall be covered by benefits.
 - Furthermore, even when, together with users, a staff evacuated in temporary facilities or other facilities, and in which offered welfare service for persons with disabilities, it shall be covered by benefits.
 - 3) Dispatch of Nursing-care staffs and acceptance of evacuees
 - When nursing-care staffs were short in an office, the government or prefecture adjusted and dispatched nursing-care staff from a different office.
 - Also, when a user needs to evacuate due to disaster and others, the government or prefecture adjusted and secured a place to accept him/her.
 - 4) Support on resuming welfare service for persons with disabilities in a disaster area
 - For support for restoration, the government implemented a subsidy project relating to the expense needed for the restoration project of facilities for supporting persons with disabilities that had been struck and devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and resuming the businesses.
 - In order for welfare service offices for persons with disabilities at disaster areas where had been sustained enormous damage to be able to provide stable services even at reconstruction period, a support base shall be established in each of devastated prefecture to/for,
 - a. Support the activities of job assistance office for persons with disabilities (secure ordering parties, rebuild channels of distribution, etc.),
 - b. Support for securing human resources for welfare and others,
 - c. Support for establishment of the support services of new systems, according to Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act and Child Welfare Act,
 - d. Support for establishment of basic counseling support center according to Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act,
 - e. Projects to work on the support of using welfare services for persons with disabilities based on the needs of persons/children with developmental disorder, and budget measures to help organize to resume the offices of nursing-care-at-home service were implemented.

Also, for mental health care, according to Disaster Relief Act, “Mental healthcare team” of 4 to 5 persons of psychiatrist, nurse, psychiatric social worker and others visited safe havens and others, in cooperation with public health nurse of a municipality.

Since symptom of PTSD could be prolonged, or number of persons with depression or anxiety disorder are thought to increase even after living place of disaster victim is changed to a temporary housing or their own house, “Mental healthcare center” has been established in each prefecture of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, which is working together with professionals of nurse, psychiatric social worker, clinical psychotherapist and others who perform mental health-care continuously and for long periods, and health-care centers and municipalities, to offer counseling support for people who need mental health-care.

Information and Support Center for Developmental Disorder established in National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities has provided, immediately after the Earthquake, the information about points to remember while supporting persons with developmental disorder in disaster areas to the people who respond to these persons in order to support them smoothly.

Also, it has created a leaflet in which the necessary responses at the time of disaster were summarized to let everyone know them.

Besides, for job assistance, “Special Counseling Corner for Disaster Victims” has been established in Public Employment Security Offices in the end of March, 2011 to offer job counseling for the general disaster victims.

In addition to this, “Special Counseling Corner” has been established in Regional Job Centers for Persons with Disabilities since April of the year to offer fine-tuned support such as job coach support or on-site counseling service.

Moreover, since May of the year, when Public Employment Security Offices discovered the needs of employment through on-site counseling service at safe havens, Regional Job Centers for Persons with Disabilities provides the service to visit the safe haven for counseling.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) offers school expense subsidy, and asks boards of education of every prefecture to accept the children in disaster areas, in order to ensure their educational opportunities, including children with disabilities.

For children in special needs education schools or special needs education classes who became difficult to go to school due to the disaster, MEXT supports children with disabilities’ school life by offering financial aid for school enrollment support, for sending experts like school counselor in order to improve mental health-care of the children who experienced Earthquake and for using experts to enhance learning activities in special needs education schools.

National Institute of Special Needs Education has created “Handbook for teachers supporting the children after the Great East Japan Earthquake ~ focused on the responses to children with developmental disabilities,” posted on its own homepage, and distributed to related authorities. (<http://www.nise.go.jp/cms/6,3758,53.html>)

MEXT and Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare have requested the following toward boards of education of every prefecture and sections with main responsibility of welfare of children with disabilities: understanding the situation of children with disabilities who experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake and supporting them, cooperation with education and welfare, such as when a board of education, schools and others found children with disabilities, advising to main responsibility division of welfare for children with disabilities in a municipality after confirming the intentions of guardians of children with disabilities, and to ensure full awareness of

a consultation desk for supporting children with disabilities.

Besides, Cabinet Office has created the page for the information relating to Great East Japan Earthquake in the homepage of Measures for persons with disabilities so as to facilitate easy linkage to the page providing the information for persons with disabilities.

2. Measures for Persons with Disabilities to ensure information and communication

In order to redress the gap of the opportunities of persons with disabilities to use information communication technology, we are promoting the study and development of information communication devices and systems taking into consideration the use of persons with disabilities, have formulated the guideline on accessibility, and working on popularization of these systems through JIS and promotion of international standardization, and promoting barrier-free for the homepages and others.

We will improve the information providing system for persons with disabilities, through building information providing system by promoting teleworking, building the information network, creating a closed-captioned video and others, and the promotion of programs with closed caption and others, and will promote the improvement of communication support system by the support by sign language, Braille and others, and by standardization of communication aid symbols and others.

【Main measures】

- In order to expand the opportunities for persons with disabilities to use or leverage information communication technology in a regional livelihood support program, “Comprehensive IT Promotion Project for Persons with Disabilities” is implemented, in which IT-related measures, such as administration of IT support center for persons with disabilities which will be a total service base of IT-related measures, and training and dispatching volunteers of teaching PC, are performed comprehensively and integrally.
- Seeing teleworking as a way of working that helps create job opportunities for those who want many different work styles and helps activate a region, Ministries concerned shall work together and promote the building of environment so as to further familiarize and expand teleworking, and its familiarization, enlightenment and others.
- In “Guideline of administration of familiarization of broadcasting for people with visual and hearing disabilities,” which was reviewed in October, 2012, goals for familiarization have been set: for programs with closed caption, “add explanatory titles to all the programs of target until 2017,” for emergency broadcast like wide-scale disaster, “Try to add explanatory titles to all the programs as much as possible,” for commentary broadcasting, “add a comment to 10% of programs of target until FY2017,” and for program with sign language interpretation, “Increase the broadcasting hours with sign language interpretation” (by NHK), and “Try to work on the implementation and improvement of broadcasting program with sign

language interpretation as much as possible” (commercial TV), and we are encouraging broadcasting industry to make efforts to achieve the goals step-by-step.

- According to “Act Pertaining to Promoting the Project of Facilitating Disabled Person’s Use of Communication and Broadcasting that Might Help Increase Their User-friendliness,” a part of production cost of closed caption is subsidized for producers of these programs, through National Institute of Information and Communications Technology.
- Prefectural police uses closed-captioned training videos and is making efforts to secure sign language interpreters for hearing-impaired persons, and in order to facilitate the communication between people who find difficulties in communication with language and police officers, “Communication support boards” donated by a cooperating group are distributed and used in police boxes, patrol cars, and others.