

Chapter 6 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, etc.” (Barrier-free Act) 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 FY 2020. 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.

[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) The Barrier-free Act states that the government is responsible to deepen people’s “mental barrier-free” by making them understand about barrier-free and by seeking their cooperation to implement barrier-free measures, and that people is responsible to understand and cooperate about barrier free, so that the elderly and persons with disabilities can smoothly move around and use facilities to secure their independent daily and social life. Also it states that barrier-free policies and measures should be verified by people and organizations, and based on the results new policies and measures should be taken to proceed with continuous and step-by-step advances toward “spiral-up” of barrier free.
- (3) In the public and commercial facilities, such as transportation, sightseeing, sports/culture, and corporate facilities, pictorial figure (JIS Z 8210 “Public Information Symbols”) used in place of letters and language represents useful information on objects, concepts or statuses which are discernible over a distance and easy to understand for all people including older persons, persons with disabilities, and person from abroad.
- (4) Our country has JIS Z 8210 “Public Information Symbols.” In May 2015, graphic symbols showing “stroller use allowed” and “stroller use not allowed” were added, and how to use such pictograms was revised by showing examples.

In March 2016, the pictograms were revised again by type of disasters, added with two warning symbols of “danger of debris flow” and five warning symbols of “danger of flood/inundation inside a levee.”

- (5) Based on JIS Z 9097 “Tsunami evacuation guidance -- Safety signing system” enacted in September 2014, the installation method of signs showing the course and distance along the route to evacuation destinations was decided, so that people can evacuate quickly to safe places from a flood, inundation inside a levee, high tide, landslide, landslip, and large-scale fire. In March 2016, JIS Z 9098 “Hazard Specific Evacuation Guidance Sign System” was established. This system is being proposed to the ISO.
- (6) For making the railway stations barrier free, part of the expenditures is subsidized by the metropolitan railway renovation project and the regional public transport securing, management and improvement projects. Of the transportation projects by local public enterprises, the improvement work making the subway stations barrier free is supported by the fiscal loan program and the financing system by Japan Finance Organization for Municipalities.
- (7) For introduction of low-floor buses, buses with a lift, welfare taxis, and light railway vehicles (LRVs), part of the expenditures is subsidized by the regional public transport securing, management and improvement projects.
- (8) Recently, people have recognized the importance of making a town an easy-to-access place for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate in society. Therefore, comprehensive town planning is being promoted in terms of welfare: for example, maintenance of sidewalks, elimination of uneven porch steps, installation of elevators in stations, improvement of acoustic signals, etc., so that persons with disabilities can easily move around, enjoy in the park, and so on.
- (9) To promote comprehensive town planning effectively, local governments recently establish welfare-oriented ordinances and promote universal-design projects (friendly to all people). The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) takes various financial measures to help local governments toward a harmonized society where the elderly, persons with disabilities, and children can live vividly and communicate with each other. As an intangible project, MIC takes Ordinary Subsidized Tax measures to provide expenditures for local governments, which promote universally designed town planning and NPOs activities; while as a tangible project, it helps local governments by the Local Revitalization Public Works Loans for promoting universal town planning, improving health & welfare facilities to support an aging society with fewer children, and improving facilities for citizens’ support activity toward a harmonized society.
- (10) The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) holds

barrier-free classes for mainly primary and middle school children toward the realization of “a mental barrier-free society,” where each one recognizes the difficulty of the elderly and persons with disabilities as an own problem, and helps such persons’ participation in the society.

- (11) The basic policy based on the Barrier-free Act sets a goal that traffic signals installed along the route of the main living areas within the improvement priority districts should be, as a principle, by FY 2020 all barrier-free type signals equipped with audible annunciators expressing the state of the signal by sound, and that pedestrian/bicycle-vehicle separated signals should be installed to prevent traffic accidents. These improvements are being promoted.
- (12) “Study Committee for Promoting ICT-assisted Pedestrian Mobility Support” launched in June 2014 (presided by Vice-Minister for Engineering Affairs, MLIT and chaired by Ken Sakamura, professor at the University of Tokyo Interfaculty Initiative in Information Studies) reviewed necessary matters, and summarized a proposal in April 2015. Based on the proposal, MLIT has set up the “Data site for pedestrian mobility support service” since July, and has publicized barrier-free data of stations, passenger facilities and buildings used by many people. Then in September, MLIT published the “Guidelines for the approaches to pedestrian mobility support service that utilizes open data” to local governments.
- (13) Based on “The Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan,” the Japan Tourism Agency improved the regions’ travelers-acceptance system in FY 2015, introducing a multi-lingual system into the consultation desk for barrier-free travels, as one of the measures.
- (14) The Road Traffic Act prohibits an ordinary driver to move alongside or cut in on a car driven by a physically handicapped person who display a sign on the car which shows any conditions attached due to physical disability on the part of the license, except for an emergency case to prevent hazards. Furthermore, the Act states that when a handicapped person is crossing or attempting to cross the road, a police officer or any other person there shall make efforts, as needed, to ensure the handicapped person to cross the road safely, and a driver shall not obstruct the passage of a handicapped person.
- (15) In response to the opinions that hybrid cars and electric cars are dangerous because of almost completely silent, MLIT formulated in January 2010 “Guidelines on Vehicle Approach Notification Devices regarding the Silence of Hybrid Cars,” based on the report of “The Study Committee on Measures for Hybrid Car’s Silence” consisting of experts, a group of visually handicapped persons, and carmakers, and urged carmakers to take proper measures early. Currently the U.N. is addressing international standards of measures, based on these guidelines, leading the global opinions toward the formulation of measures.

- (16) MLIT is promoting drivers education, guidance by safe driving supervisors, and other PRs and enlightenment activity, in order to raise awareness of protecting pedestrians including persons with disabilities. Also, for persons with disabilities, MLIT provides traffic safety education in detail according to the degree of disabilities by holding a traffic safety class by using subtitled videos to encourage their participation, experience and practice, so that they can acquire necessary skills and knowledge.
- (17) 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.
Following the “Basic Act on Disaster Control Measures as amended in June 2013,” CAO formulated and publicized in August 2013 “Guidelines on Evacuation Support for Persons Needing Evacuation Activity Support,” which include the procedures for preparation and utilization of the name list of persons needing evacuation activity support. The amended Act also includes obligation rules to improve shelters’ living environment, for which “Guidelines on How to Manage Shelters to Keep a Good Living Environment” were formulated and publicized to support evacuees including the elderly. In FY 2015, to help local governments’ efforts, CAO held an experts meeting to review such issues as the designation of shelters/evacuation places, improvement of shelters’ toilets, support systems for persons needing assistance, etc.
- (18) In August 2015, MEXT, MHLW and MLIT advised the related-organizations to strengthen their linkages to share basic information on social welfare/school/medical facilities that may possibly be affected by sediment-related disasters, in order to promote measures for persons in need of consideration. Also the Ministries are improving the disaster prevention information systems, and taking measures for preparation against a flood, tsunami, high tide, sediment-related disasters, etc. by providing hazard maps showing detailed information, such as past disasters, dangerous areas, evacuation places, evacuation routes and how to obtain information.
- (19) 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).
- Measures for reduction or exemption of service charges
MHLW notified service providers for persons with disabilities that they should flexibly reduce or exempt service charges for users.
 - (i) 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.

(ii) 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.

(iii) 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.

(IV) 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

, Mental health care

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 prospected 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.

f Developmental disabilities

The Information and Support Center for Persons with Developmental Disorders, which is located in the National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities and is a core organization as a nationwide support center for persons with developmental disorders, provided practical information on how to support persons with developmental disorders to service providers in the disaster-affected areas, just after the earthquake had occurred. Also, the center created a booklet that summarizes necessary responses in the event of disasters and published it in their website to share the information with citizens. (<http://www.rehab.go.jp/ddis/>)

„ Securing opportunities for education and support for school attendance

In order to ensure the educational opportunities of young students including young students with disabilities, 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.

... Handbook for Teachers

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

† Understanding infants/school children’s situations

MEXT and MHLW 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.

(20) 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 Koban(police boxes) and the like.

(21) To eliminate an anxiety of persons with disabilities, who are worried about being affected by a crime or accident, community police officers make routine visits to homes and workplaces to respond to their consultations and requests to the police, and to provide information on the occurrence of crimes or accidents in the neighborhood and information on knowhow of security.

2 Measures to Enhance Information Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

To take advantage of the merits of IT, it is necessary to create society where everybody including persons with disabilities is able to dispatch and access to information freely.

In order for people including the elderly and persons with disabilities to access to government information, each administrative agency is making efforts for information delivery through websites, based on the Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS X 8341-3) decided on the contents of websites (posted information).

[Main Measures]

- (1) To increase opportunities for persons with disabilities to use ICT, the IT Support Center for Persons with Disabilities, a comprehensive service base of IT-related measures, has been operated (in 26 prefectural and city governments, as of the end of FY 2014), and PC volunteers have been fostered and dispatched.
- (2) Home appliance and telecommunication equipment makers are developing and manufacturing apparatuses by considering the elderly and persons with disabilities. Last year, international standardization organizations, ISO/IEC JTC 1, including our country, started discussions to improve the accessibility of smartphones.
- (3) An electronic voting system was approved in February 2002 to use for the elections of the members and the head of the assembly of local governments. As of the end of March 2016, six municipalities enacted an e-voting ordinance.

As for introduction of e-voting, MIC is conducting investigation and analysis of the implementation situations and technical issues to raise reliability of an e-voting system and offering necessary information to local governments.

- (4) To provide important information on the government measures for persons with disabilities, the Cabinet Office issues a government bulletin in a form of voice information CD, “Voice toward Tomorrow,” and a braille/expanded characters bulletin, “Fureai-Rashinban” (six times a year, each 4,600 copies), and distributes to about 3,000 places, including the Association for Visually Impaired, the Japan Federation of the Blind, special support schools, prefectural libraries, local governments, etc.
- (5) The Criminal Affairs Bureau of MOJ distributes to all the district Public Prosecutors Offices a DVD “Should you encounter criminal damage...?” which explains to crime victims, their family and citizens about the protection and support systems offered by the Public Prosecutors Office. This can also be used by hearing impaired persons by means of the captions and subtitles. Also, a braille pamphlet and its voice recorded CD version for crime victims have been prepared to provide information for visually impaired persons and distributed to the nationwide Public Prosecutors Offices and braille libraries.
- (6) The human rights bodies of MOJ prepared awareness-raising video and its superimposed version for promoting various human rights issues. The pamphlet includes voice codes (an exclusive machine reads the text aloud) for visually impaired persons.
- (7) Considering a vote by persons with disabilities, polling places provide “braille lists of the name of candidates and political parties,” braille voting paper, cassette tapes, braille version and voice recorded compact disks containing candidates information, a slope for a person in a wheelchair, braille writing equipment, etc.
- (8) “The Guidelines on Administrative Broadcasting Extension Service for Visually Impaired Persons” set the following goals for broadcasting organizations to provide by FY 2017: closed-captions for all broadcasting programs, as many captions as possible for broadcasting emergency events, at least 10% captions for commentaries, and increasing sign-language broadcasting hours.
The Captioned CM Promotion Council (established in October 2014 by the Japan Advertisers Association Inc., Japan Advertising Agencies Association, and National Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Japan) is continuously making efforts to expand and enlighten about captioned CM production by holding captioned CM seminars.
- (9) METI is promoting together with the movie-related organizations to place a subtitle or caption on a screen of Japanese movies. MHLW also aims at and promotes establishing information provision facilities for hearing-impaired

persons in all prefectures, which produce and lend educational materials to disseminate subtitled video libraries and sign-language, dispatch sign-language interpreters, and lend information equipment.

- (10) In response to the requests from visually-impaired persons, the Ministry of Finance, the National Printing Bureau, and the Bank of Japan announced on April 26, 2013 “the initiatives toward the improved discrimination of the types of Bank of Japan notes” in order to make current notes easier-to-use, and subsequently 1) issued refined 5,000 yen notes (started to issue on May 12, 2014), 2) offered the type of notes identification application for smartphone (U・Qui・Ch-kun) (started to deliver on December 3, 2013), and 3) offered technical information to private companies about the exclusive type of notes identification equipment.
- (11) Each prefectural police uses subtitled movies for hearing-impaired persons and secure sign-language interpreters. To smooth communications between a police officer and a person with communication difficulty, the prefectural police and cooperating group improved “Communication Support Boards” that were donated by cooperating group by adding illustrations, and distributed to Koban, patrol cars and the like.