

Section 3 Disaster Management Based on Disasters in FY 2020

3-1 Expansion of Targets of Support Grants for Reconstructing Livelihoods of the Affected

The "Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of the Affected due to Disaster (Act No. 66 of 1998)" is a law to support the reconstruction of livelihoods by providing support grants through a fund contributed by prefectures from the perspective of mutual assistance for affected people who have suffered significant damage to their livelihoods when a natural disaster occurs which causes damage difficult for the affected municipality or prefecture to handle on their own. Since its enactment in 1998, the act has been revised several times.

In recent years, there have been a series of large-scale disasters, including the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake and the Heavy Rain Event of July 2018, and there have been calls to expand this system of support. In June 2019, the "Working-level Conference on the System on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of the Affected due to Disaster (hereinafter referred to as the "Working-level Conference") was established based on the recommendations of the National Governors' Association in November 2018. Furthermore, based on the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, on July 22 of the same year, the National Governors' Association made an urgent request to the government for an early conclusion to be reflected in the policy and for it to be applied to the damage caused by the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020 as to expanding the scope of the System on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of the Affected due to Disaster into partially destroyed households, which the National Governors' Association has been requesting. Based on these requests, on the 30th of the same month, the Working-Level Conference compiled a report on the results of a study to expand the scope of support into some partially destroyed households, which received damage not surmounting to households with 40 to 50% destruction.

Based on the results of this study, the government proceeded with coordination and deliberation, and as a result, the "Bill for Partial Amendment of the Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of the Affected due to Disaster " was submitted to an extraordinary Diet Session in November 2020, and after deliberation by both the House of Representatives and House of Councilors, the act was unanimously passed and enacted on December 2, 2020, and was promulgated and enforced on December 4, 2020 (Act No. 69 of 2020).

The revised law adds households which were partially destroyed and were deemed difficult to live in without substantial repairs (households with homes partially destroyed in the 30% range) as eligible households. This law ensures 1,000,000 yen for construction or purchase of a house, 500,000 yen for repair, and 250,000 yen for rent, and applies to disasters that occurred after the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020.

Amount of Support Grants for Reconstructing Livelihoods of the Affected

Category of affected household	Proportion of damage (*)	Amount of grant provided		
		Basic support fund	Additional grant	
			Basic support fund	Amount
Completely destroyed	50% or more	1,000,000 yen	Construction/purchase	2,000,000 yen
			Repair	1,000,000 yen
			Loan	500,000 yen
Largely destroyed	Over 40%	500,000 yen	Construction/purchase	2,000,000 yen
			Repair	1,000,000 yen
			Loan	500,000 yen
Minor destruction	Over 30%	—	Construction/purchase	2,000,000 yen
			Repair	500,000 yen
			Loan	250,000 yen

*The percentage of economic damage to the main components of the dwelling to the total value of the dwelling, which is determined by a damage assessment by the municipality and is reflected in the description of "completely destroyed" or "major largely" on the disaster affected certificate.

【Column】

Promotion of Insurance and Mutual Aid

The expansion of the scope of support grants for reconstructing livelihoods of the affected is intended to enhance the measures of "public support" for reconstruction of livelihoods of affected people, but it is also important to take "self-help" measures for recovery from natural disasters. In this regard, the report of the Working-level Conference states that "it is necessary to promote self-help measures to rebuild livelihoods in the event of a natural disaster, such as by encouraging people to purchase appropriate insurance and mutual aid."

By purchasing insurance and mutual aid, people can prepare for damage to their houses and household goods caused by disasters such as floods, storm surges, and slope failure. In the case of fire insurance, which is the most common type of insurance, there are products that cover not only fire, but also wind, water, snow, lightning, and other forms of wind and water damage caused by storm and flood disaster, provided that the storm and flood disaster exceeds a certain amount. However, it should be noted that the types of disasters covered and the nature of the coverage vary depending on the insurance company, mutual aid organization, and product.

When considering the purchase and confirming the contents of insurance or mutual aid, it is important to have a clear understanding of the disaster risk of one's home using hazard maps, etc., and to confirm the details with each insurance company or mutual aid organization to secure the necessary coverage. In addition, it is important to consider the coverage, including household goods, according to the conditions of one's own residence, as follows.

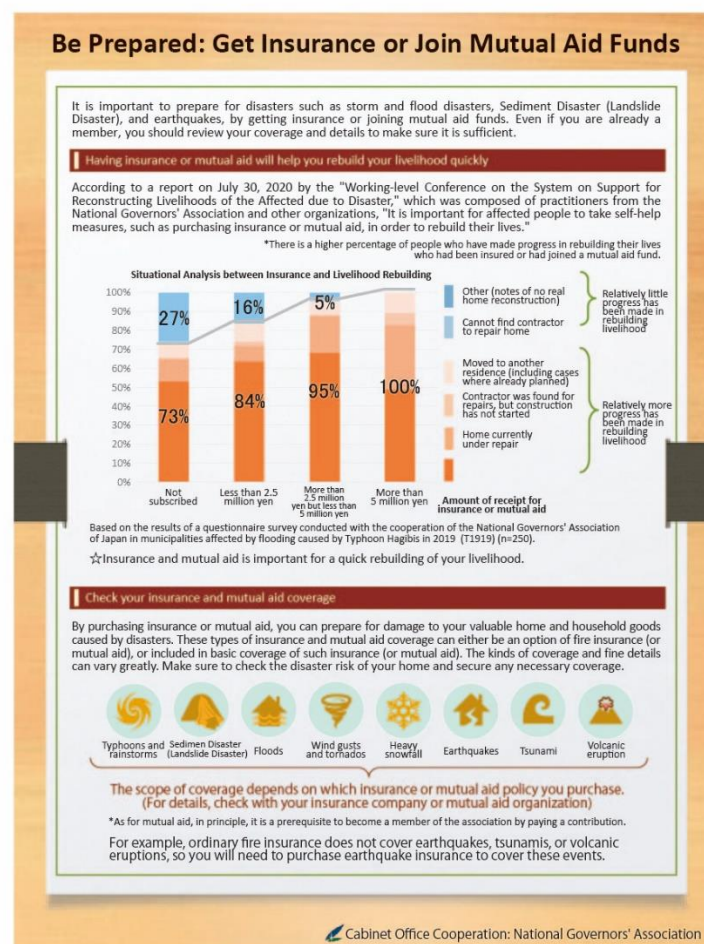
- For homeowners: coverage for both building and household goods

- For tenants: coverage for household goods only
- For rented apartments: check if the management association has insurance for common areas
- For condominiums: The exclusive area is treated as the owner's home, so consider whether the building should be included in the coverage in addition to the household goods, taking into account the number of floors
- For car owners: covered by vehicle insurance

As described above, it is hoped that the "self-help" approach, in which people confirm the disaster risk and the condition of their homes and secure the necessary insurance, and the "public support" approach under the "Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of the Affected due to Disaster" will work together to enable people to quickly rebuild their lives after a disaster has occurred.

(Source: http://www.bousai.go.jp/taisaku/seikatsusaiken/pdf/saikenshien_kekka.pdf)

(Source: <http://www.bousai.go.jp/taisaku/seikatsusaiken/pdf/201204leaf.pdf>)



(See: <http://www.bousai.go.jp/taisaku/seikatsusaiken/pdf/201204leaf.pdf>)

3-2 Operation of the Disaster Relief Act based on Actual Conditions, Issues in Affected Areas

In the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, the Kuma River overflowed, causing extensive damage to houses and other structures mainly in Kumamoto Prefecture, and many affected people had to evacuate. Municipalities in the mid-hills and mountainous areas, which were particularly hard hit, faced challenges in quickly securing emergency temporary housing such as a shortage of construction sites and private rental housing that could be used to provide emergency temporary housing.

In light of these situations, for the smoothest and most appropriate implementation of rescue, the following efforts were made to apply the "Disaster Relief Act" according to the actual conditions and challenges faced by the affected areas.

(1) Use of Emergency Temporary Housing during the Emergency Repair Period

Emergency temporary housing, which is for those who cannot use their houses due to total destruction, and emergency repair, which allow people to live in their houses after repairs, were systems that were not allowed to be used together because their purposes and objectives were different.

However, based on the "Report on the Results of the Administrative Evaluation and Monitoring of Housing Security at the Time of Disaster: From the Perspective of Supporting the Reconstruction of the Livelihoods of Affected People," which was compiled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications on March 31, 2020, a recommendation that "it should be possible to provide emergency temporary housing to those who had to continue living in their damaged houses and to wait for a long time until repairs were completely done after applying for the Emergency Repair System" was put together.

(Reference: https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/hyouka_200331.html#kekkaoukoku)

Furthermore, in recent years, due to a shortage of contractors and other factors, the repair period for emergency repairs has become longer and longer and there are many households that have no choice but to continue living in shelters until repairs were completed. Also, on the occasion of the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, there were calls from the affected local governments to secure housing for the affected people while their homes were being repaired.

In light of these circumstances, the purpose of the project was set to secure emergency temporary housing for affected people during the emergency repair period, and to encourage affected people who were moving into emergency temporary housing to rebuild their homes in their hometowns. A decision was made to enable providing emergency temporary housing for 6 months from the date of the disaster for households whose houses were partially destroyed or more, and for which emergency repairs were expected to take a long time.

This policy has been in effect since the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, and since then it has been a permanent policy, covering disasters covered by the "Disaster Relief Act."

Use of Emergency Temporary Housing during Emergency Repair Period

In addition to securing temporary housing for the affected people during the emergency repair period, the project will also encourage those who have moved into emergency temporary housing to rebuild their homes in their hometowns.

<Background and Issues>

- Due to the shortage of construction workers, the emergency repair period has been prolonged, and there are many households that have to continue living in shelters or temporarily move in with relatives or acquaintances until repairs are completed.
- The municipalities affected by the recent Heavy Rain Event of July 2020 have made earnest requests to secure housing for the victims affected people during the emergency repair period.

Support the affected people to rebuild their homes
in their hometowns by allowing them to move into temporary housing
until emergency repairs are completed.

<Summary>

- **Eligibility:** Affected people who are expected to undergo emergency repairs for more than one month, and whose homes are damaged to the extent that they cannot be used as a residence (half-destroyed) or more, and who have difficulty securing other housing.
- **Use period:** In principle, six months from the date of the disaster (if emergency repairs are completed, the room will be vacated as soon as possible)
- **Expenses:** Actual costs (based on local conditions)

(2) Provision of Emergency Temporary Housing Using Discontinued Public Housing

In Hitoyoshi City, Kumamoto Prefecture, which was severely damaged by the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, there was a shortage of private rental housing that could be used as emergency temporary housing and public housing available for immediate occupancy for the affected people who were unable to live in their homes. It was assumed impossible to build enough emergency temporary housing due to the lack of suitable sites. For this reason, 160 vacant units of public housing were discontinued, renovated with water and heat resistant paint in bathrooms, installation of air conditioners, ventilation fans, bathtubs and water heaters, wallpaper replacement and so on, which were necessary for the affected people to move in, and provided as emergency temporary housing.



【Column】

Emergency Temporary Housing in Kumamoto Prefecture After the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020

In Kumamoto Prefecture, which was particularly hard hit by the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, effective measures were taken to provide emergency housing to affected people as quickly as possible in order to ensure their safety and security.

1. Early notification of the expected availability of emergency temporary housing and other housing for affected residents

Kumamoto Prefecture, in cooperation with the municipalities affected by the disaster, estimated the number of housing units needed to secure housing for the affected people based on the damage to houses ascertained from the number of Disaster Affected Certificates issued, and other data. The number of units needed for emergency rental housing, emergency construction housing and public housing was discussed and presented at a meeting of the Disaster Management Headquarters of the prefecture. For affected people who live in shelters after a disaster and are anxious about their housing arrangements, it is reassuring to know that local governments will provide early information on housing. Thus, in order to secure emergency temporary housing and other housing for affected people, it is important to make a forecast of the number of units needed as early as possible in the event of a disaster and work to secure them.

Response to Emergency Temporary Housing

Municipality	Estimated number of units needed to be secured for housing	Emergency housing secured					Details of temporary housing for which construction has already begun			
		Number of units expected to be used for rental emergency housing	Use of public housing, etc. (including planned)	Number of units needed for construction-type emergency housing	Number of units under construction	Number of units needed in the future	Temporary complex name	Units	Ground-breaking	Scheduled move-in
Kuma-mura	400+α	60	7	300+α	269	31+α	Multipurpose Square Temporary Housing Complex	33	7/16	8/2-
							Kuma-mura Ground Temporary Housing Complex	133	8/1	Late Sep.
							Sakura Dome Temporary Housing Complex	35	8/7	Mid Sep.
							Daiobaru Park Temporary Housing Complex (Nishiki-machi)	88	8/7	Mid Oct.
Hitoyoshi City	600-800	150	186	290-490	265	25-225	Hitoyoshi Castle Sites Temporary Housing Complex	15	7/11	Mid Aug.
							Kozueyama Ground Temporary Housing Complex	33	7/15	Early Sep.
							Murayama Ayame Plaza Temporary Housing Complex	16	7/19	Early Sep.
							Shimoharada No.1 Temporary Housing Complex	18	7/30	Mid Sep.
							Shimoharada No.2 Temporary Housing Complex	11	7/30	Mid Sep.
							Nishiaida-Kami-machi Temporary Housing Complex	51	8/1	Late Sep.
							Ishino Park Temporary Housing Complex	37	8/13	Mid Oct.
							Murayama Park Temporary Housing	84	8/13	Mid Oct.
Yatsushiro City	300-600	200-500	42	40+α	40	+α	City Stadium Temporary Housing	26	7/19	Early Sep.
Ashikita-machi	120	30	30	60	50	10	Koga-Naka-machi Temporary Housing Complex	14	8/9	Early Oct.
Tsunagi-machi	10	-	-	10	10	-	Meshima Yume Moyai Green Space Temporary Housing Complex	50	7/15	Early Sep.
Sagara-mura	25	-	1	24	24	-	Tsunagi-machi Otokojima Temporary Housing Complex	10	7/28	Late Sep.
Yamae-mura	25	-	-	25	25	-	Wanpaku Hiroba Temporary Housing Complex	16	7/13	Mid Aug.
							Sports Park Temporary Complex	8	8/1	Mid Sep.
							Central Ground Temporary Complex	25	7/11	Mid Aug.
Total	Approx. 1,500-2,000	440-740	266	800-1,000	683	100-300	-	683		

Source: "Kumamoto Prefecture Disaster Management Headquarters of the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020"
(See: <https://www.pref.kumamoto.jp/soshiki/1/51182.html>)

2. Early provision of emergency temporary housing using mobile homes

In the wake of the Heavy Rain Event of July 2018, trailer houses and container houses were utilized as emergency temporary housing. These can be provided quickly if the infrastructure such as water and sewage at the site is in good condition. Following the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, Kuma Village in Kumamoto Prefecture was able to start construction of 33 emergency temporary housing units within two weeks of the disaster that struck on July 4, by transporting and using mobile homes that had been set up at exhibition sites in other local governments' areas such as Hokkaido and Ibaraki Prefecture. These houses were ready for use within a month. Eventually, Kumamoto Prefecture provided 68 units of emergency temporary housing using mobile homes.



Emergency temporary housing constructed in Kuma Village
(Mobile home on the left front and back, wooden temporary housing on the right)

(3) Rescue by Public Support and Support related to Administrative Work for Coordination with Volunteer Activities

In order to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of "public support" in disaster relief activities such as shelter management and obstacle removal, it is necessary to coordinate between rescue through "public support" and volunteer activities through "mutual support" (e.g., dividing roles at the disaster site, matching the needs of affected people, etc.). However, in recent years, the amount of such coordination has increased as volunteer activities have flourished. Thus, taking the opportunity from the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, regarding administrative work for coordination between rescue by 'public support' and volunteer activities, when outsourcing to disaster volunteer centers established by Social Welfare Councils, etc. (hereinafter referred to as "Disaster VCs" in this section), a decision was made that expenses (personnel expenses (limited to overtime work allowance for staff who were setting-up/operating Disaster VCs and wages of temporary and part-time employees newly hired directly by the staff who were setting-up/operating) and traveling expenses (travel expenses for staff dispatched from outside the affected local governments to the Disaster VCs)) required to secure the personnel necessary for this work would be covered by the national treasury's sharing of disaster relief expenses.

This system has been in effect since the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, and since then it has been a permanent system, covering disasters covered by the "Disaster Relief Act."

【Column】

Disaster Volunteer Centers

Disaster volunteer centers (Disaster VCs) are set up in the event of a disaster of a scale that cannot be dealt with by the mutual aid of neighboring residents alone. These centers are established and operated mainly by the Social Welfare Councils of the prefectures and municipalities in the affected areas to provide support for the affected people and for recovery with the help of volunteers. According to the Japan National Council of Social Welfare, Disaster VCs are operated based on the three principles of "affected people-centered," "locally-led," and "collaborative." With the cooperation of specialized NPOs and other organizations, they coordinate and liaise with the government and other related organizations, identify the needs of the affected people and match them with volunteer activities, procure equipment and materials, and disseminate information, as well as coordinate many other activities related to disaster relief.

The main volunteer activities carried out through the Disaster VCs (activities by general volunteers) include removing mud and cleaning affected houses, transporting and sorting relief supplies, supporting the operation of shelters (e.g., improving living conditions and serving food), and helping people move into temporary housing.



Reception at the disaster volunteer center



Removing mud from damaged houses

3-3 Countermeasure Package for the Restoration of Lives and Livelihoods of the Affected

(1) Support for the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020

The Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, which occurred under COVID-19 crisis, caused extensive inundation due to river flooding as well as extensive damage to lifelines such as roads, railroads and water supply, and to local industries such as agriculture and tourism in the Kyushu region and other wide regions of Japan.

The national government had been doing their best to rescue lives and cope with emergency rehabilitation and had been providing push-mode support in the form of relief supplies such as cardboard beds and air conditioners as well as masks and antiseptic solutions in response to COVID-19, collaborating with affected local governments. In the affected areas, however, many people were forced to live in shelters, and spent their days in anxiety. In addition, many small and medium enterprises and small/micro enterprises faced the harsh reality that they may lose their will to resume their business due to the heavy damage caused by this torrential rain under a worsening economic situation due to COVID-19.

In light of this situation, by the national government as a whole for further accelerate measures toward recovery, instructions were given by then Prime Minister Abe to establish the Team to Support the Daily Lives and Livelihood Restoration of Affected People at the first meeting of the Major Disaster Management Headquarters held on July 5, 2020, in order to provide more detailed, prompt, and powerful support for the livelihood of the affected people due to the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020. In addition, at the 7th meeting for the Major Disaster Management Headquarters held on the 13th of the same month, instructions were issued to quickly put together a Restoration of Lives and Livelihoods of the Affected, being led by the Team to Support the Daily Lives and Livelihood Restoration of Affected People. In response to this, on July 30 of the same year, the national government formulated the "Package for the Restoration of Lives and Livelihoods of the Affected" as an urgent response for rebuilding lives and livelihoods in the affected area to the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020, and on the following day of the 31st, the use of approximately 101.7 billion yen in reserve funds was decided through a Cabinet decision.

(Reference: http://www.bousai.go.jp/pdf/r20oame_saiken_pack.pdf)

This package of measures based on the needs of the affected areas and the characteristics of each region under COVID-19 crisis is organized by four pillars to ensure the security of affected people: (1) Life Restoration, (2) Livelihood Restoration, (3) Disaster Response Recovery, and (4) Disaster Relief. At the same time, this package was established to take necessary financial measures so that the affected local governments could work on recovery with peace of mind. Specifically, in order to rebuild the lives of affected people, in addition to support for demolishing partially destroyed houses and the rapid removal of waste and earth and sand from residential areas, roads and towns, the government has decided to secure emergency housing and allow affected people to use temporary housing during the emergency repair period. In addition, in order to rebuild livelihoods, a decision was made to create the "Subsidy for Reconstruction of Livelihoods" which was expanded and made more flexible by the existing group subsidies and local government partnership subsidies, to support the refinement and improvement of profitability of tourist sites to rebuild the tourism industry in the affected areas, and to implement measures for affected areas in the Go To Travel program. A decision was also made to provide comprehensive measures for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, including support for replanting of fruit trees and agricultural machinery, and support for disposal of driftwood and sediment at fishing ports.

A Package for the Restoration of Lives and Livelihoods of the Affected

July 30, 2020
The Heavy Rain Event of July 2020
Team to Support the Daily Lives and Livelihood Restoration Affected

1. Basic Policy

- In response to the Heavy Rain Event of July 2020 under the influence of COVID-19, measures that should be taken urgently to rebuild the lives and livelihoods of the affected people were compiled, taking into account the needs of the affected areas and the characteristics of each region. And the first set of measures was taken using the discretionally reserve quickly.
- Necessary financial and other measures will continue to be taken to ensure the peace of mind of the affected people and to enable disaster-stricken local governments to tackle recovery with peace of mind.

2. Emergency Response Measures (Main Items)

(1) Restoring lives

○ Disposal of waste and sediment - aiming for early removal from living areas

- Prompt removal of waste and sediment from residential areas, roads, and streets
- Support for removal of damaged agricultural greenhouses and crops
- Promote early reconstruction of people's lives by supporting the dismantling of half-destroyed houses in light of the designation as a specific emergency disaster



[Waste removal from the city]

○ Securing housing

- Provision of emergency temporary housing and support for emergency housing repairs
- Temporary housing can be used during the emergency repair period.
- Provision of support grants for reconstructing livelihoods of the affected (up to 3 million yen)
- Human resources support for early issuance of Disaster Affected Certificates and provision of information on vacant rooms for the affected people

○ Continuous support for the affected people

- Door-to-door visits to people living at home, watching over and providing consultation support to affected people moving into temporary housing, etc.
- Support for commuting to school, study and school attendance, mental health care, etc.
- Free legal consultation on legal issues for the affected people
- Establishment of a free and dedicated consumer consultation number, etc.

○ Securing transportation

- Support for substitute bus services for local railroads and disaster recovery of affected railroads



[Discharge from the Kumagawa Railway Kumagawa River No. 4 Bridge]

○ Financial support

- Expand the scope of life and welfare fund loans to households affected by the disaster

(2) Reconstructing livelihoods

○ Support for small and medium enterprises in the tourism industry, etc.

- Expand subsidies and make them more flexible by establishing the "Subsidy for Reconstruction of Livelihoods" (tentative name), which will provide more generous support to businesses affected by the disaster (maximum subsidy rate: 3/4, maximum limit: 1.5 billion yen)
- In addition to the recent torrential rains under the coronavirus crisis, businesses that have been affected by past disasters are eligible for partial subsidies (up to 500 million yen) under certain conditions.
- Establish projects for reconstruction of small-scale businesses affected by the disaster in order to provide support according to the actual damage (subsidy for sustainability) (subsidy rate 2/3, maximum 2 million yen)
- Subsidies for the cost of restoring arcade lights, etc. in damaged shopping areas, and organizing events to attract customers
- In addition to supporting the reconstruction, refinement, and improvement of the profitability of tourist attractions as a whole, strong support for the recovery and reconstruction of tourism demand
- Fundraising support by Japan Finance Corporation, etc.



[Innkeepers in Kumamoto Prefecture affected by flooding]

○ Support for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries

- In light of the widespread flooding of vegetables, fruit trees, and other crops, provide comprehensive support for additional pest control and fertilization, securing seeds and seedlings, removal of crop residues, replanting of damaged fruit trees and tea trees and management of young trees, securing alternative farmland for the period when income is interrupted due to the large-scale replanting of fruit trees, and efforts to achieve early maturity
- Reconstruction of damaged agricultural greenhouses, agricultural machinery, livestock barns, livestock processing facilities, and other community facilities
- Promote early restoration of farmland and agricultural facilities while taking into account the perspective of preventing repeated disasters, and promote efforts to strengthen disaster response and improve productivity in an integrated manner
- Restoration of damaged forests and forest roads, and forest conservation and erosion control measures in degraded forest areas
- Support for the removal, collection, and disposal of driftwood and sediment that drifts and accumulates in fishing grounds and ports



[Agricultural land with collision of debris and sediment inflow]

○ Employment measures in the region, etc.

- Relaxation of requirements for employment adjustment subsidies related to recent disasters and an increase of the subsidy rate
- Provide the basic allowance (unemployment allowance) of employment insurance when a business is closed due to a disaster

(3) Emergency disaster recovery

○ Restoration of infrastructure such as rivers and roads

- Prompt restoration and improvement of public engineering facilities, etc., removal of garbage, sediment and drifted wood, and emergency measures for Sediment Disaster (Landslide Disaster) areas, etc.
- The national government, etc. will act as the authority for restoration work on rivers, roads, etc. managed by disaster-affected local governments that require advanced technology, etc.
- Restoration of farmland and roads for resumption of farming, and early restoration of forest facilities, fishing ports, beaches, etc.
- Partial management of port facilities by the national government (Yatsushiro Port)

○ Expediting disaster recovery projects

- Improve the efficiency of disaster assessment and speed up the implementation of disaster recovery projects.
- Support for disaster recovery by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism's Technical Emergency Control Force (TEC-FORCE), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' Support Advice Team (MAFF-SAT), etc.



[Damage assessment by the TEC-FORCE]

(4) Disaster relief

○ Emergency rescue at shelters, etc.

- Establishment of shelters, emergency relief such as emergency food distribution, etc.
- Promote the use of hotels and inns
- Provision of condolence money for disasters, etc.

○ Activities of the Self-Defense Forces, etc.

- [Disaster relief activities by the Self-Defense Forces (helicopter transport at the time of the disaster)]



Source: Cabinet Office data

(2) Support for the Heavy Snow Damage from December 2020 to January 2021

Due to the heavy snow from December 2020 to January 2021, a lot of damage such as stranding on the Kan-Etsu and Hokuriku Expressways and fatal accidents during snow-removal work occurred.

The national government had been taking all possible precautions and responding to these disasters by holding Ministerial Meetings and Inter-Agency Disaster Alert Meetings/Countermeasure Meetings, then in order to ensure the safety and security of the affected people, and to enable the affected local governments to tackle snow removal and other rehabilitation tasks without hesitation, measures such as support for affected people and affected local governments were compiled on January 22.

(Reference: http://www.bousai.go.jp/pdf/210122_setugaitaiou.pdf)

The measures include support for snow removal and exclusion by local governments, and support for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and small and medium-sized business operators to deal with snow disaster. As for the cost of snow removal and disposal by local governments, on January 22, a decision was made to give a grant to 218 municipalities, towns and villages, including organizations covered by the Disaster Relief Act by using an advance of 36.9 billion yen of the special tax allocation that was to be delivered in March.

1. Basic Policy

- Due to the heavy snowfall this winter, many people have been reported to be stranded on the Kan-Etsu and Hokuriku Expressways, and many people have been killed in accidents during snow-removal work.
- In order to ensure the safety and security of the affected people and to enable the affected local governments to tackle snow removal and other restoration tasks without hesitation, this is a compiled list of measures to support the affected people and local governments.
- Efforts will continue to be made to assess the state of damage and take the necessary measures in cooperation with the related ministries and agencies.

2. Countermeasures**(1) Support for snow removal projects of local governments, etc.**

○ Financial support for snow removal, snow clearance, etc. by local governments

- Snow removal expenses of local governments are covered by ordinary tax allocation and special tax allocation.
- Moved-up special tax allocation (218 municipalities, 36.9 billion yen).
- The cost of outsourcing snow removal work for the elderly will be covered by special tax allocation.
- At the beginning of the fiscal year, the government supports the cost of snow removal from roads in snow-covered and cold regions managed by local governments through the Comprehensive Social Infrastructure Improvement Grants. Depending on snowfall conditions, additional allocation of snow removal subsidies and part of the Comprehensive Social Infrastructure Improvement Grants that were initially withheld will be made.

○ Support for snow removal from houses (removal of obstacles) under the Disaster Relief Act

- Operation based on actual conditions, such as extending the rescue period to remove obstacles as legally required.

(2) Support for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and small and medium-sized businesses to cope with snow disaster

○ Support for reconstruction, repair, and removal of agricultural greenhouses, and replanting of fruit trees

- When local governments remove damaged agricultural greenhouses, etc., they will be supported by the Disaster Waste Removal Project.
- Promptly assess damage to horticultural facility mutual insurance, etc., and pay claims as early as possible.
- In order to help agriculture, forestry, and fisheries rebuild their businesses, they will be provided with long-term, low-interest safety net funds for them.
- The program supports the cost of replanting damaged fruit trees and the resulting unprofitable period.

○ Support for small and medium-sized businesses

- (1) Establishment of a special management consultation service by small and medium-sized company organizations, etc.
- (2) Disaster recovery loans from Japan Finance Corporation, etc.
- (3) Safety Net Guarantee No. 4, which guarantees 100% of the debt separately from the general guarantee by the Credit Guarantee Corporations. And other financial support for disaster recovery are provided.

(3) Other

○ Responding to strandings

- Necessary countermeasures will be taken for stranded vehicles on the Hokuriku Expressway, etc., based on the results of the verification.

○ Call for prevention of accidents related to snowfall, etc.

- The government issues an administrative notice to local governments to alert them to the need to prevent accidents, including the need for multiple people to work together to remove snow.

Source: Cabinet Office data

(3) Support for Damage Caused by the Earthquake Centered Off the Coast of Fukushima Prefecture in 2021

Late at night on February 13, 2021, as the tenth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which caused unprecedented damage to the region was approaching, an earthquake with a maximum seismic intensity of 6.0 + struck the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, with its epicenter offshore of Fukushima Prefecture.

The national government held a Ministerial Meeting, and made every effort to implement disaster response measures, while the people of the region, who have been making tremendous efforts to recover from the Great East Japan Earthquake, had faced a harsh reality that they may lose the will to get their life back and restart their businesses due to the extensive damage caused by Typhoon Hagibis in 2019 (T1919), and furthermore, the earthquake occurred under a worsening economic condition caused by COVID-19.

In light of this situation, in order for the national government to provide support to the affected people as soon as possible so that their hopes for recovery would not be lost, at a Ministerial Round Table on February 19, Prime Minister Suga issued instructions for the relevant ministers to work together to quickly compile support measures for this earthquake. In response to this, on the 26th of the same month, the national government compiled the "Set of Support Measures for the Earthquake Centered Off the Coast of Fukushima Prefecture in 2021" as a set of measures that should be taken urgently to rebuild the lives and livelihoods of the affected people, considering the needs and characteristics of the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

(Reference: http://www.bousai.go.jp/pdf/210226_fukushima.pdf)

The support measures included rebuilding the lives and livelihoods of the affected people through subsidies for small and medium-sized companies and other groups, which had been strongly requested by the affected areas,

and support for the rehabilitation of public facilities that were scheduled to be used as vaccination sites for COVID-19. A Cabinet Decision was made to use reserve funds of about 3.1 billion yen of subsidies for small and medium-sized companies, which required immediate additional budgetary measures.

Summary of Support Measures for the Earthquake Centered Off the Coast of Fukushima Prefecture in 2021

February 26, 2021 Disaster Management Bureau of the Cabinet Office

1. Basic Policy

- For the earthquake centered off the coast of Fukushima Prefecture which occurred when the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which caused unprecedented damage was approaching, measures that should be taken urgently to rebuild the lives and livelihoods of the affected people will be compiled taking into account the needs and characteristics of the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and prompt action will be taken. Prompt response support for the early recovery of the affected areas under the novel coronavirus crisis will be promoted, and vaccination implementation will not be hindered. In addition, firm action will be taken on issues in the affected areas, disaster prevention and mitigation, and for National Resilience.
- Utmost efforts will be made for the rapid restoration of the affected areas, the restoration of people's lives and livelihoods, in cooperation with the affected local governments, from the perspective of the affected people.

2. Emergency Response Measures (Main Items)

(1) Rebuilding lives

- Securing housing
 - Provision of support grants for reconstructing livelihoods of the affected (up to 3 million yen)
 - Implementation of emergency repairs, etc. under the Disaster Relief Act and support for **seismic retrofitting**, etc.
 - Support for the establishment of consultation offices and on-site consultation for home repair, etc.
- Removal of disaster waste
 - **Early reconstruction support through special dismantling support for half-destroyed houses, etc.**
 - Support for the removal of damaged agricultural greenhouses, etc.
- Support for students in the affected areas
 - Consideration for **students in disaster areas** (supplementary exams, make-up exams, etc.)
 - Studying support (tuition reduction and exemption, scholarships, etc.), psychological care, etc.
- Financial support, etc.
 - Flexible repayment deferment and other measures by financial institutions, and support for debt restructuring for affected people under the Guidelines of Workout for Restructuring Debt Owned by Victims of Natural Disasters

(2) Restoration of livelihoods

- Support for small and medium-sized businesses
 - **Special measures for group subsidies for small and medium-sized companies, etc., to support business resumption and continuation (subsidy rate: up to 3/4)**
 - * **Fixed subsidies** (up to 500 million yen) for businesses that are in the process of recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake and have been affected by the novel coronavirus crisis, subject to certain requirements.
 - Fundraising support by Japan Finance Corporation, etc.
- Support for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries
 - **Comprehensive support** for securing seeds, harvesting and preparation work, reconstruction of community facilities, agricultural greenhouses, and barns, etc., for **resumption of farming**.
 - Support for the reconstruction, repair, and removal of facilities for the promotion of special forest products and joint use of fisheries.
 - Fundraising support by Japan Finance Corporation, etc.
- Support for the recovery of tourism
 - **As a countermeasure against rumors, accurate information on the disaster area will be disseminated through social media and official websites, supporting the refinement of tourism attractions and their appeal.**



[A hotel damaged by the earthquake]



[Equipment damaged in a greenhouse]

(3) Disaster recovery and lifeline support

- Quick disaster recovery of public civil engineering facilities, etc. (disaster recovery of damaged public civil engineering facilities, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries facilities, etc.; support by TEC-FORCE and MAFF-SAT)
- Support for restoration of public facilities, etc. (restoration of medical, water supply, school, social education, social welfare facilities, etc.)
- Support for public transportation
- Reconstruction projects following the Great East Japan Earthquake (support for ongoing reconstruction projects)
- As for the burden to local governments caused by this support measure, appropriate local fiscal measures will be taken so as not to interfere with the financial management of the affected local governments.

Source: Cabinet Office data