

Chapter 3 Major Disasters in FY2024

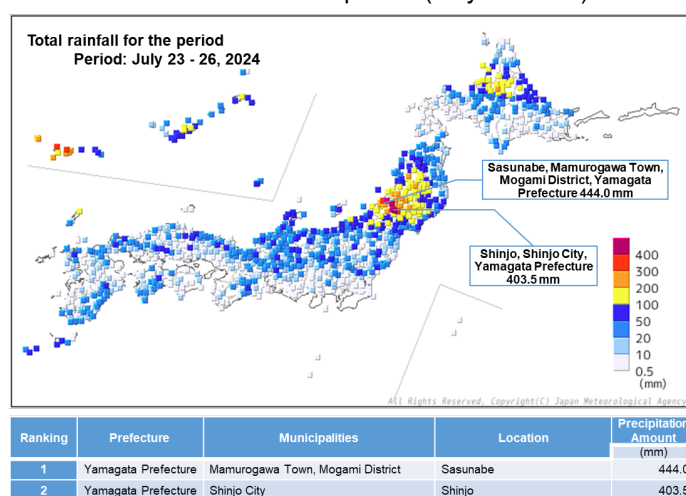
Due to its natural conditions, Japan is prone to various disasters, such as floods, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters occurring almost yearly. In recent years, largescale disasters have occurred, including the 2011 off the Pacific coast of Tohoku Earthquake, the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake, the July 2018 Heavy Rains, the 2019 East Japan Typhoon, the July 2020 Heavy Rains, the heavy rains that began on July 1, 2021, Typhoon No. 14 in 2022 and the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake. In 2024, damage occurred in various parts of the country due to heavy rain caused by a rainy season front that began on July 25, an earthquake with its epicenter in the Hyuga Sea, Typhoon No. 10 in 2024, and heavy rain that began on September 20, 2024. The disaster related to the heavy rain that began on September 20, 2024, is summarized in the Special Feature.

Section 1 Disasters Related to Heavy Rainfall, etc., Caused by the Baiu Rainy Season Front from July 25, 2024

(1) Overview

The rainy season front extended from the Sea of Japan to northern Japan around July 23, 2024, and warm, moist air flowed toward the front, causing heavy rainfall from northern to western Japan, mainly on the Sea of Japan side of the Tohoku region. Very heavy and torrential rain fell intermittently in Yamagata and Akita Prefectures, including the formation of a stationary linear mesoscale convective system in Yamagata Prefecture on the 25th. As the risk of a major disaster due to heavy rain increased significantly, the Meteorological Agency issued two special heavy rain warnings for Yamagata Prefecture: one in the early afternoon and one late at night on the 25th. Total precipitation from the 23rd to the 26th exceeded 400 mm, mainly in the Shonai and Mogami areas of Yamagata Prefecture, far surpassing the average monthly rainfall for July in some areas. At several locations, the 24-hour and 72-hour precipitation totals were the highest on record, marking a historic level of rainfall.

Total rainfall for the period (July 23 to 26)



Source: Japan Meteorological Agency document

(2) State of Damage

Heavy rains caused by the rainy season front that began on July 25, 2024, led to flooding in 37 rivers administered by national and prefectural governments across four Tohoku prefectures. As a result, there were five fatalities (two in Akita and three in Yamagata) and five minor injuries (one in Akita and four in Yamagata). The damage to residential buildings included 25 destroyed buildings, 593 partially destroyed or partially damaged buildings, and 1,521 buildings flooded above or below the floors (Fire and Disaster Management Agency information as of March 24, 2025). In addition, up to 2,805 households in Akita and Yamagata prefectures experienced water outages, and electrical blackouts occurred across the country, with up to approximately 6,600 households losing power within the service area of Tohoku Electric Power Network Co.

(3) Response by the Government

The government established the Emergency Contact Office in the Prime Minister's Office at 1:05 p.m. on July 25, 2024, and held an Inter-Agency Disaster Alert Meeting at 1:45 p.m. on the same day. Subsequently, at 0:58 a.m. on July 26, the Emergency Contact Office in the Prime Minister's Office was reorganized as the Emergency Response Office in the Prime Minister's Office, and an emergency meeting team consisting of director-general-level officials from relevant ministries and agencies was convened. An Inter-Agency Disaster Management Meeting was held at 3:15 p.m. on July 26.

On August 21, Mr. Matsumura, then Minister of State for Disaster Management, visited the disaster affected areas in Akita and Yamagata Prefectures.

The Disaster Relief Act was applied to 26 municipalities in Akita and Yamagata prefectures, and the Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of Disaster Victims was applied to three municipalities in Yamagata Prefecture. Regarding the designation of the Disaster of Extreme Severity, the Cabinet approved the Cabinet Order on September 6 for disasters caused by heavy rain between June 8 and July 30, which was promulgated and enforced on September 11.



Inspection of the disaster site in Yamagata Prefecture by the Minister of State for Disaster Management, Matsumura (Cabinet Office data)



Inspection of the disaster site in Akita Prefecture by the Minister of State for Disaster Management, Matsumura (Cabinet Office data)

Section 2 Disaster Caused by Typhoon No. 10 in 2024

(1) Overview

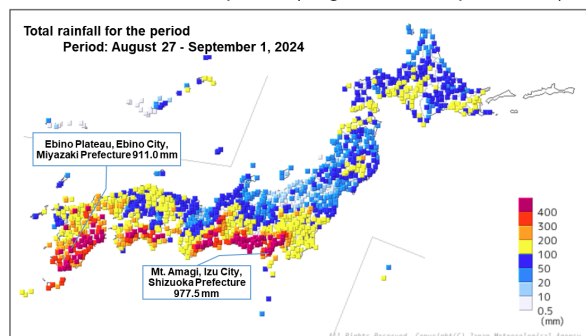
Typhoon No. 10, which originated near the Mariana Islands at 3:00 a.m. on August 22, 2024, developed as it moved northward through August 24, and on August 25 changed its course to the northwest, moving over the sea south of Japan. The typhoon slowed down near Japan, became very strong, and approached the Amami region on the 27th, then changed course northward and approached southern Kyushu. The typhoon made landfall near Satsumasendai City, Kagoshima Prefecture, at around 8:00 a.m. on the 29th with strong force, then moved from the northern Kyushu region to the Shikoku region at a relatively slow speed, weakening as it went, and became a tropical cyclone over Shikoku at 9:00 p.m. on the 30th. The tropical cyclone then moved off the Tokaido coast through September 1.

Due to the prolonged influence of warm and moist air around the edge of the slow-moving Typhoon No. 10 and the Pacific High, record-breaking heavy rainfall occurred mainly on the Pacific side from western to eastern Japan starting on the 26th. Stationary linear mesoscale convective systems were observed in Kagoshima (excluding the Amami region), Miyazaki, Oita, Tokushima, Kagawa, Hyogo, and Mie prefectures between August 28 and 31, when the typhoon approached and passed through western Japan. From August 27 to September 1, total precipitation exceeded 900 mm in many places in southern Kyushu and the Tokai region, and 600 mm in many places in northern Kyushu and Shikoku, with some areas recording more than twice the normal monthly precipitation for August.

As the typhoon approached Kyushu with extremely strong force, winds exceeding 30 m/s were observed in Kagoshima Prefecture from August 27 to 29, and winds exceeding 20 m/s were observed in the southern, Amami, and northern Kyushu regions, with some areas experiencing windstorms. In some locations, the maximum wind speeds recorded during the period were the highest ever recorded for August or the highest in history. As the typhoon strengthened to a level seen only once in several decades and was expected to come very close to Kagoshima Prefecture, the Meteorological Agency issued emergency warnings for windstorms, high waves, and storm surges for municipalities in Kagoshima Prefecture (excluding the Amami region) on August 28.

As the typhoon approached, warm and moist air around it caused the atmosphere to become extremely unstable, resulting in damage from tornadoes and other severe gusts in Miyazaki, Tottori, Saitama, and Gifu prefectures.

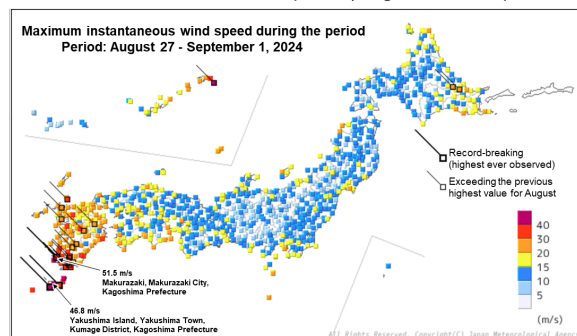
Total rainfall for the period (August 27 to September 1)



Ranking	Prefecture	Municipalities	Location	Precipitation Amount (mm)
1	Shizuoka Prefecture	Izu City	Mt. Amagi	977.5
2	Miyazaki Prefecture	Ebino City	Ebino Plateau	911.0

Source: Japan Meteorological Agency document

Maximum instantaneous wind speed (August 27 – September 1)



Ranking	Prefecture	Municipalities	Location	Wind Speed (m/s)	Wind Direction	Date/Time
1	Kagoshima Prefecture	Makurazaki City	Makurazaki	51.5	ESE	August 29 00:53
2	Kagoshima Prefecture	Yakushima Town, Kumage District	Yakushima Island	46.8	SE	August 28 20:06

Source: Japan Meteorological Agency document

(2) State of Damage

In 2024, Typhoon No. 10 caused 43 rivers administered by the national and prefectural governments in Tokyo and 10 other prefectures to overflow, resulting in inundation damage. As for human casualties, 8 fatalities (3 in Aichi, 1 in Tokushima, 2 in Fukuoka, 1 in Saga, and 1 in Kagoshima), 11 serious injuries, and 120 minor injuries were reported. The damage to residential buildings included 19 destroyed buildings, 2,991 partially destroyed or damaged buildings, and 2,925 buildings flooded above or below the floors (Fire and Disaster Management Agency information as of March 24, 2025).

Lifelines were also affected, with water outages reaching up to 3,508 households and electrical blackouts occurring nationwide. Within the service area of Kyushu Electric Power Transmission and Distribution Co., approximately 264,720 households experienced blackouts. In addition, traffic was severely impacted by expressway closures and railway suspensions, while road shoulder collapses and bridge failures caused temporary isolation in parts of Kumamoto, Oita, and other prefectures.

(3) Response by the Government

The government established an information contact office at the Prime Minister's Office at 3:00 p.m. on August 26, 2024. The office held an Inter-Agency Disaster Alert Meeting. Later, at 8:00 a.m. on August 28, when a disaster was deemed likely, the Authorized Disaster Management Headquarters was established, and the Information Contact Office was reorganized as the Emergency Response Office in the Prime Minister's Office. At 9:00 a.m. the same day, the first meeting of the Authorized Disaster Management Headquarters was held (three meetings in total were held through August 30). Mr. Matsumura, then Minister of State for Disaster Management and head of the Headquarters, requested that relevant ministries and agencies respond with the utmost sense of urgency. He also called on prefectures at risk of disaster to apply the Disaster Relief Act and urged the public to evacuate without hesitation. On August 29, a Ministerial Meeting was held in the presence of then Prime Minister Kishida.

The Disaster Relief Act was applied to 175 municipalities in six prefectures at the stage when a disaster was likely to occur. Subsequently, the Disaster Relief Act was also applied to 22 cities and towns in seven prefectures where residential damage occurred. Regarding the designation of the Disaster of Extreme Severity, the Cabinet approved the Cabinet Order on October 25, 2024, for disasters caused by storms and heavy rain between August 26 and September 3, 2024, which was promulgated and enforced on October 30, 2024.

Section 3 Wildfires in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, etc.

(1) Overview

Around Japan, a west-high/east-low pressure pattern continued from around February 13, 2025, and the Pacific side of the Tohoku region experienced mostly sunny days. In Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, February precipitation was the lowest on record, and dry-weather advisories were issued from February 18 to March 4.

The Ofunato District Firefighting Union Headquarters detected a fire that broke out in a forested area in Akasaki Town, Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, at around 1:00 p.m. on February 26, 2025. By the time the fire was extinguished on April 7 of the same year, the burned area had reached approximately 3,370 hectares (as of April 17), marking the largest wildfire spread since the Heisei era.

In addition, wildfires occurred in Okayama and Ehime prefectures on the afternoon of March 23, 2025, and in Miyazaki Prefecture on March 25. The wildfires in Miyazaki, Okayama, and Ehime prefectures were extinguished on March 27, April 11, and April 14, respectively.



Taken March 3, Ofunato City, Niigata Prefecture
Battalion Activity



Taken during the morning of March 4, Ofunato City
(Ayari, Sanriku Town)
Aomori Battalion Activities

(2) State of Damage

The wildfire in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, caused one fatality, 54 houses were completely destroyed, and 33 houses were partially destroyed or damaged (Fire and Disaster Management Agency information, as of April 15, 2025). In Ofunato City, evacuation instructions were issued, and up to 12 evacuation shelters were opened (as of 10:00 a.m., March 10, 2025, according to the Cabinet Office), with approximately 1,249 people evacuated. All evacuation instructions had been lifted by March 10.

In Okayama Prefecture, a wildfire broke out in Akuura (Kaigarayama), Minami-ku, Okayama City, and spread to the neighboring city of Tamano, burning approximately 565 hectares. In Ehime Prefecture, a wildfire occurred in the Nagasawa district of Imabari City, spreading to neighboring Saijo City and burning about 442 hectares. Four people were injured, and five houses were damaged in Imabari City (Fire and Disaster Management Agency information, as of April 18, 2025).

(3) Response by the Government

Regarding the wildfire in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, the government established the Information Contact Office in the Prime Minister's Office at midnight on February 27, 2025, which was reorganized as the Emergency Response Office in the Prime Minister's Office at 9:00 a.m. on February 28. In addition, a Ministerial Meeting was held at 5:30 p.m. on February 28, followed by a second meeting on March 7. On March 16, Mr. Sakai, Minister of State for Disaster Management, visited the disaster site in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture.

Emergency firefighting teams from 15 prefectures were dispatched, including local fire departments, with up to 2,100 personnel per day engaged in aerial and ground firefighting operations. The local fire brigade carried out activities such as calling for and guiding evacuations, extinguishing fires in cooperation with firefighting units, checking for heat sources and residual fires, conducting nighttime patrols, and gathering information on the damage situation.

The Ministry of Defense (MOD) and the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), in close cooperation with relevant ministries, agencies, and local governments, conducted aerial firefighting and other operations using up to 11 large helicopters from the Ground and Air SDF while ensuring safety.

At evacuation shelters, efforts were made to ensure a good living environment by providing toilets, meals (including hot meal box from local restaurants), partitions, beds, and other facilities in line with evacuees' needs.



Situation at a shelter (Inokawa Elementary School)



Soup kitchen (Rias Hall)

The Disaster Relief Act and the Act on Support for Reconstructing Livelihoods of Disaster Victims were applied to Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, on February 26 and March 6, respectively. The Cabinet approved the designation of the Disaster of Extreme Severity for the wildfire disaster in Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, on March 25, 2025, and the ordinance was promulgated and enforced on March 28, 2025.

Regarding the wildfire that began on March 23, 2025, the government established the Information Contact Office in the Prime Minister's Office at 9:00 a.m. on March 24, which was reorganized as the Emergency Response Office in the Prime Minister's Office at 9:00 a.m. on March 26.

In Okayama Prefecture, up to 400 personnel per day were engaged in firefighting operations by local fire departments and brigades. The MOD and SDF, in close cooperation with relevant ministries, agencies, and local governments, conducted aerial firefighting and other operations using up to seven

large helicopters from the Ground SDF while ensuring safety. In Ehime Prefecture, emergency firefighting teams were dispatched, including up to 1,000 personnel per day from local fire departments and brigades, who engaged in firefighting operations. The MOD and SDF, in close cooperation with relevant ministries, agencies, and local governments, also conducted aerial firefighting and other operations using up to seven large helicopters from the Ground and Air SDF while ensuring safety.

Regarding the Disaster Relief Act, Ehime Prefecture decided to apply it to Imabari City and Saijo City on March 23.

* The damage situation is still under investigation and may be subject to change

Section 4 Response by Volunteers and NPOs

(1) Volunteer Response to Major Disasters in 2024

In the disasters caused by heavy rains associated with the rainy season front that began on July 25, 2024, Disaster Volunteer Centers (hereinafter referred to as “Disaster VCs”) were established by social welfare councils in 10 cities and towns in Akita and Yamagata Prefectures. Approximately 10,000 volunteers participated in activities through these Disaster VCs (as of October 10, 2024).

In the disaster caused by Typhoon No. 10 of 2024, Disaster VCs were established by social welfare councils in 4 cities and towns in Kanagawa and Oita Prefectures. Approximately 900 volunteers participated in activities through these Disaster VCs (as of September 15, 2024).

In the affected areas, disaster victim support activities were carried out based on local circumstances. These included cleaning and tidying up damaged houses, removing disaster debris, transporting sediment from inside houses and waterways, distributing supplies at evacuation shelters, and assisting with relocation from shelters.

Furthermore, in addition to volunteering support provided through disaster VCs, specialized non-profit organizations (hereinafter referred to as “NPOs”) and other organizations carried out a wide range of support activities. These included assistance with evacuation shelter operations, technical support for damaged houses such as debris and rubble removal, handling of disaster waste in the affected areas, support for evacuees at home, creating safe spaces for children, and providing mental health care.



Disaster relief activities by volunteers (Nikaho City Council of Social Welfare data)



Volunteer activities by NPOs, etc., with expertise (JVOAD data)

(2) Collaboration among government, volunteers, NPOs, etc.

In the disaster-affected areas of Yamagata Prefecture, various disaster support organizations, including the government, social welfare councils, and NPOs, held “Information Sharing Meetings”. These served as platforms to share information about support activities and coordination efforts. Through these meetings, coordinated support from the government, volunteers, and NPOs was implemented to address the needs of disaster victims and assist evacuees at home.

Additionally, on a national level, the Cabinet Office, the Japan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (JVOAD), the National Council of Social Welfare, and the Disaster Volunteer Support Project Meeting (Support P) held the “National Information Sharing Meeting (Core Meeting)”. In these meetings, information about the affected areas held by each organization was shared and discussed methods for future disaster support.