

Chapter 1: Police Organization and the Public Safety Commission System

Section 1: Police Organization

1. Public Safety Commission System

The Public Safety Commission System was established to ensure the political neutrality of the police and in consideration that it would be appropriate for persons representing the good sense of the nation's citizens to supervise the police in order to prevent any self-righteousness in the way the police operate. The National Public Safety Commission (NPSC) was set up on a national level to supervise the NPA, while Prefectural Public Safety Commissions (PPSC) were set up at prefectural levels to supervise the prefectural police. In addition, the Minister of State is appointed as the Chairman of the NPSC in order to coordinate the two requirements of ensuring the political neutrality of the police and clarifying the administrative responsibilities of the Cabinet in relation to public safety.

2. National and Prefectural Police Organization

In contrast to the prefectural police that assume centralized enforcement duties, the NPA, as a national agency, formulates police systems and also conducts police operations regarding cases involving national public safety, undertakes the administration of matters which form the foundation of police activities such as police education and training, police communications, criminal identification as well as the development of police administration. In addition, as of April 1, 2012, along with police headquarters, police academies and other facilities, there were 1,174 police stations in the 47 prefectural police.

Section 2: Public Safety Commission Activities

1 National Public Safety Commission

In accordance with the Police Act and other laws, the NPSC supervise the NPA by undertaking administrative tasks that fall within the scope of its authority, such as the establishment of NPSC Regulations, appointment of or taking disciplinary action against local senior police officers (officers among prefectural police organizations ranked Assistant Commissioner and higher), confirmation of the relevancy of practical objectives and requirements when designating a designated Boryokudan (organized crime group), etc. It also gives guidance to the NPA concerning measures to prevent the various cases of

misconduct by police personnel, etc. During 2011, the NPSC established 12 NPSC rules including the rule on inspection rounds at detention facilities.



Regular meeting of the NPSC

Although the NPSC usually convenes regular meetings every week on Thursdays, other than regular meetings, extraordinary meetings, such as the meeting held on March 12, 2011 in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, are also convened. In addition, the NPSC strives to maintain an understanding of the state of public safety and police operations through the mutual exchange of views between members of the commission, and by listening to reports from the NPA, conducting visits by NPSC members to nationwide locations, exchanging views with PPSC members and conducting on-site inspections of police activities.

Case: In October 2011, a member of the NPSC visited Fukushima Prefecture to inspect the status of damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and to encourage the dispatch unit officers engaged in activities in the affected areas



NPSC member encouraging dispatch unit officers engaged in activities in the affected areas (second from the left).

2 Prefectural Public Safety Commission (PPSC)

Prefectural Public Safety Commissions supervise the prefectural police by undertaking many administrative tasks in relation to citizens' lives such as issuing driver's licenses, regulating traffic, awarding benefit payments to victims of crime, supervision of various types of business such as antique dealing, and by receiving reports from Chiefs of Police at regular meetings and other assemblies and giving guidance on incidents and accidents occurring within the jurisdiction, incidence of disasters and subsequent efforts made by the police, the state of public safety and the various police policies implemented in view of the state of public safety, organizational status, personnel management, etc.

PPSCs generally convene three or four regular meetings a month and also strive to maintain an understanding of the state of public safety and police operations through participation in Police Station Councils, discussions with relevant organizations such as the board of education, and on-site inspections of police activities, etc.

Case: In February 2012, the Gunma PPSC held a meeting for an exchange of views with the members of Gunma Prefecture Board of Education under the theme of "Juvenile Delinquency, Safety Measures" to discuss the current state of juvenile delinquency and future measures.



Members of the Gunma PPSC engaged in an exchange of views with members of the Board of Education (2nd row from right)

Case: In March 2012, an examination was conducted regarding police responses by Chiba, Nagasaki and Mie Prefectural Police in relation to a murder case occurring in Saikai, Nagasaki prefecture. The report on the examination results stated that items related to a recreational excursion by the Narashino Police Station had been omitted.

Under the strict supervision of the Chiba PPSC, the Chiba Prefectural Police organized a structure consisting mainly of the Inspection Department,

headed by the Director General of Police Administration, and undertook a re-examination. Furthermore, the NPSC also issued a request to the Chiba PPSC for a thorough inspection of the investigation.

For the re-examination, the Chiba PPSC convened a total of seven meetings, including four extraordinary meetings, and undertook strict inspection and guidance, demanding reports on investigation status, etc. as required. The results of the re-examination revealed that the recreational excursion was considered to have affected the police response, and in addition, as an issue from the perspective of the organizational operation of Chiba Prefectural Police, it became clear that organizational management by senior officers was inadequate, that they lacked the ability to consider the case from the viewpoint of the victims and citizens, and that the "spirit of police reformation" was not thorough. Consequently, Chiba Prefectural Police were determined to review effective policies and other matters in relation to these points and report the results of this review to the Chiba PPSC. Following inspection by the Chiba PPSC, these were prepared as guidelines and subsequently implemented.

3 Mutual Communications between Public Safety Commissions

The NPSC and all PPSCs hold various liaison conferences in order to maintain constant close communications. During 2011, two liaison meetings between the NPSC and all PPSCs nationwide were held, in which PPSC members conducted exchanges of views concerning the status of police supervision and other matters.

Additionally, during 2011, in each Regional Police Bureau and in Hokkaido, a total of thirteen liaison meetings were held between jurisdictional public safety commissions, and between the Hokkaido Public Safety Commission and the Area Public Safety Commission of Hokkaido. Members of the NPSC also attended these meetings which involved reports concerning the state of public safety and the efforts of each prefecture, and exchange of views.

Furthermore, exchanges of views between PPSCs and liaison meetings between the PPSCs of the designated prefectures including Tokyo, Hokkaido, Kyoto, and Osaka were also held.