

Chapter 1 Police Organization and the Public Safety Commission System

Section 1 Police Organization

1 Public Safety Commission System

The Public Safety Commission System serves a significant role in ensuring the democratic operation and political neutrality of the police, and the National Public Safety Commission (NPSC) was set up on a national level to supervise the National Police Agency (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 Chairperson of the NPSC in order to coordinate the two requirements: 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, 2015, along with police headquarters, police academies, and other facilities, there were 1,167 police stations in the 47 prefectural police.

Section 2 Public Safety Commission Activities

1 National Public Safety Commission (NPSC)

In accordance with the Police Act and other laws, the NPSC supervises the NPA by indicating all-encompassing policies and 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). In 2014, the NPSC established 12 NPSC Regulations, including the regulation to secure the appropriate implementation of operations pertaining to specially designated secrets relating to police.

The NPSC usually convenes regular meetings every week on Thursdays. 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, exchanging views with PPSC members and conducting on-site inspections of police activities.



Regular meeting of the NPSC

Case: In January 2015, during a visit to Fukui Prefecture, the Chairperson of the NPSC inspected the Mihama Nuclear Power Plant and provided encouragement to security units deployed at nuclear facilities, in addition to inspecting the implementation status of training at a police academy and the surrounding areas of the scene where a couple was suspected of having been abducted by North Korea.



The Chairperson of the NPSC, providing encouragement to the security detachment at the Mihama Nuclear Power Plant.

2 Prefectural Public Safety Commissions (PPSC)

Prefectural Public Safety Commissions supervise the prefectural police by undertaking many administrative tasks in relation to citizens' lives such as issuing drivers' 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 Prefectural Police at regular

meetings and other assemblies and giving guidance on the police efforts based on incidents, accidents and disasters within the jurisdiction, organizational status, personnel management and other matters.

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.

Case: In January 2014, members of the Saga PPSC rode in a cycling simulator with a screen that displays a simulated traffic environment. The simulator allows cyclists to receive practical learning on traffic rules and etiquette.



A member of the Saga PPSC rides in a cycling simulator

3 Handling Complaints and Giving Instructions for Inspections

A system for filing complaints has been stipulated in the Police Act. Any person who has a complaint about the duties executed by the personnel of the prefectural police may file the complaint in writing to the PPSC. The PPSC will generally notify the complainant of its decision in writing. In 2014, PPSCs nationwide received 930 complaints.

In addition, in accordance with provisions in the Police Act, the NPSC and PPSCs may give specific instruction for inspection to the NPA and prefectural police respectively.

4 Mutual Communications between Public Safety Commissions

The NPSC and all PPSCs hold various liaison conferences in order to maintain constant close communications. In 2014, two liaison meetings between the NSPC and all PPSCs nationwide were held, in which views were exchanged concerning the status of activities by the Police Station Councils.

In 2014, 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 in 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, liaison meetings between the PPSCs of Tokyo, Hokkaido, Kyoto, Osaka and other designated prefectures were also held.

Case: In May 2014, in Kanagawa Prefecture, a liaison meeting of 16 PPSCs

was held for members of the Public Safety Commissions of designated prefectures, including Tokyo, Hokkaido, Osaka, Kyoto and 12 other prefectures. At this meeting, the members discussed matters pertaining to the status of complaints filed with the Public Safety Commissions, the roles of the Public Safety Commissions and the enhancement of their activities.



Liaison meeting of 16 PPSCs