

2. History



In 1872, the Japanese government sent the first Superintendent General Toshiyoshi KAWAJI to Europe to study the police system. He returned the following year, then established the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department in the Ministry of Interior in 1874. This was the first modern police organization in Japan. Police power, at that time, was held by the national government.

In the process of democratization of Japan after World War II, the Public Safety Commission system was established under the former Police Act enforced in 1948. This created a structure consisting of national and municipal police with the aim of ensuring democratic management and decentralization of police power.

The former Police Act had an epochal significance in democratizing the police. However, it had institutional shortcomings such as the existence of a multitude of municipal police forces in parallel with the National Rural Police. This caused several problems such as inefficiency of police force operations and low cost-effectiveness due to geographical segmentation of the police units and unclear distinction of responsibilities between the municipal police forces and the national government in terms of maintaining public peace and order.

Hence, the former Police Act was amended in its entirety into the present act in 1954 by retaining its merits and improving the institutional shortcomings. Consequently, the National Police Agency was established and the present police system was formed.

3. Organizational Structure

The Police Act empowers the national government to establish a central police organization to control and supervise prefectural police forces on matters of national concern. The Act also gives each prefecture the authority to carry out police duties to "protect the lives, bodies, and property of individuals" and "maintain public safety and order" within its jurisdiction. At both the national and prefectural levels, Public Safety Commissions have administrative supervision powers over the police.

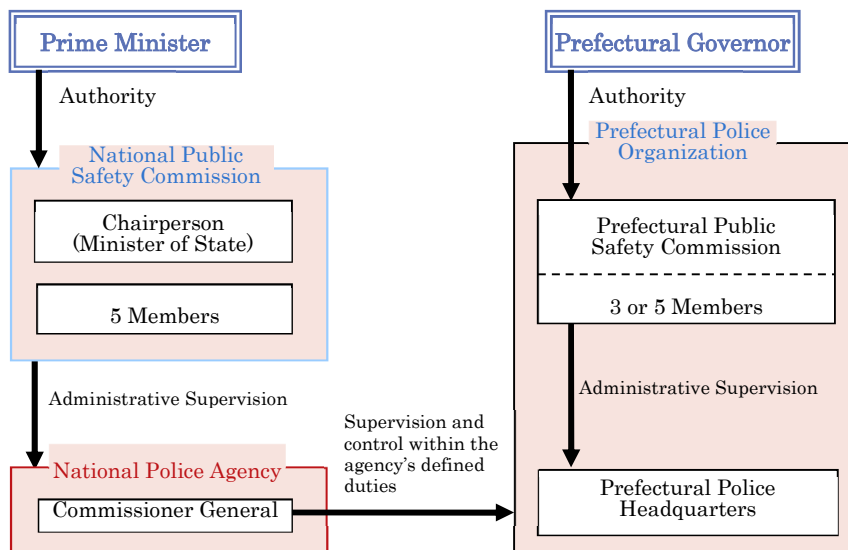
A. National Police Structure

The National Public Safety Commission (NPSC) and the National Police Agency (NPA) constitute Japan's national police organization.

(1) National Public Safety Commission

After World War II, the Public Safety Commission system was established through the police reform. The main objective of establishing this system was to ensure democratic administration and political neutrality of the police under the administrative supervision by the Commission which consists of members representing the good sense of the public.

System of Public Safety Commissions



- Note 1 The Commissioner General is appointed by the NPSC with the approval of the Prime Minister
 Note 2 The Superintendent-General of the MPD is appointed by the NPSC with the consent of the Tokyo Public Safety Commission and approval of the Prime Minister.
 Chiefs of Prefectural Police are appointed by the NPSC with the consent of the respective PPSCs.

The NPSC supervises the NPA. The Prime Minister is not empowered to exercise direct command or control over the Commission. This ensures the political neutrality of the Commission.

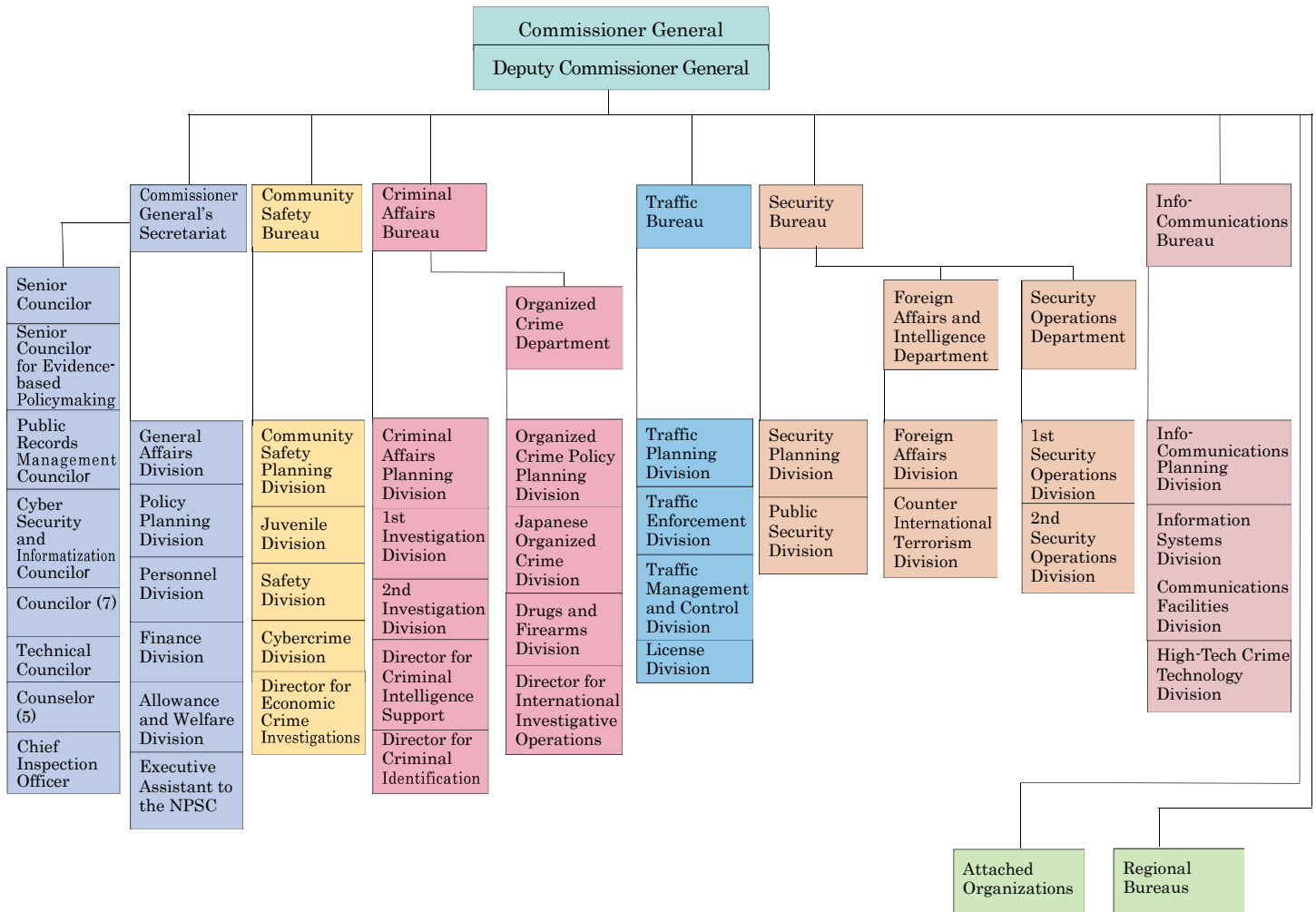
The Commission draws up basic policies and regulations, coordinates police administration on matters of national concern and sets general standards for training, communications, criminal identification, criminal statistics, and equipment.

The Commission appoints the Commissioner General of the NPA and chiefs of prefectural police organizations. The Commission indirectly supervises prefectural police organizations through the NPA.

The Commission is composed of a chairperson and five members. To make it clear that the responsibility for public safety lies with the cabinet, a state minister is assigned as the chair, who presides over the Commission meetings. Members are appointed by the Prime Minister with the consent of both houses of the Diet and serve a five-year term. Individuals who served as professional public servants in the police or prosecution in the preceding five years may not be appointed. To ensure political neutrality, no more than two members may be appointed from the same political party.

To fulfill its duty, the Commission holds a regular weekly meeting and additional meetings where necessary.

Organizational Structure of NPA (2019)



(2) National Police Agency

(a) Organizational Structure and Authority

The Commissioner General, leading the NPA, is appointed by the NPSC with the approval of the Prime Minister. The Commissioner General, under the supervision of the Commission, oversees the agency's operations, appoints agency employees, and manages prefectural police organizations. The NPA, as a national agency, formulates police systems and also conducts police operations regarding cases involving national public safety, undertakes administration of matters which form the foundation of police activities such as police education and training, police communications, and criminal identification as well as coordination of police administration.

(b) Organizations Attached to the National Police Agency

NPA-attached organizations include the National Police Academy, the National Research Institute of Police Science and the Imperial Guard Headquarters.



National Police Academy



National Research Institute of Police Science



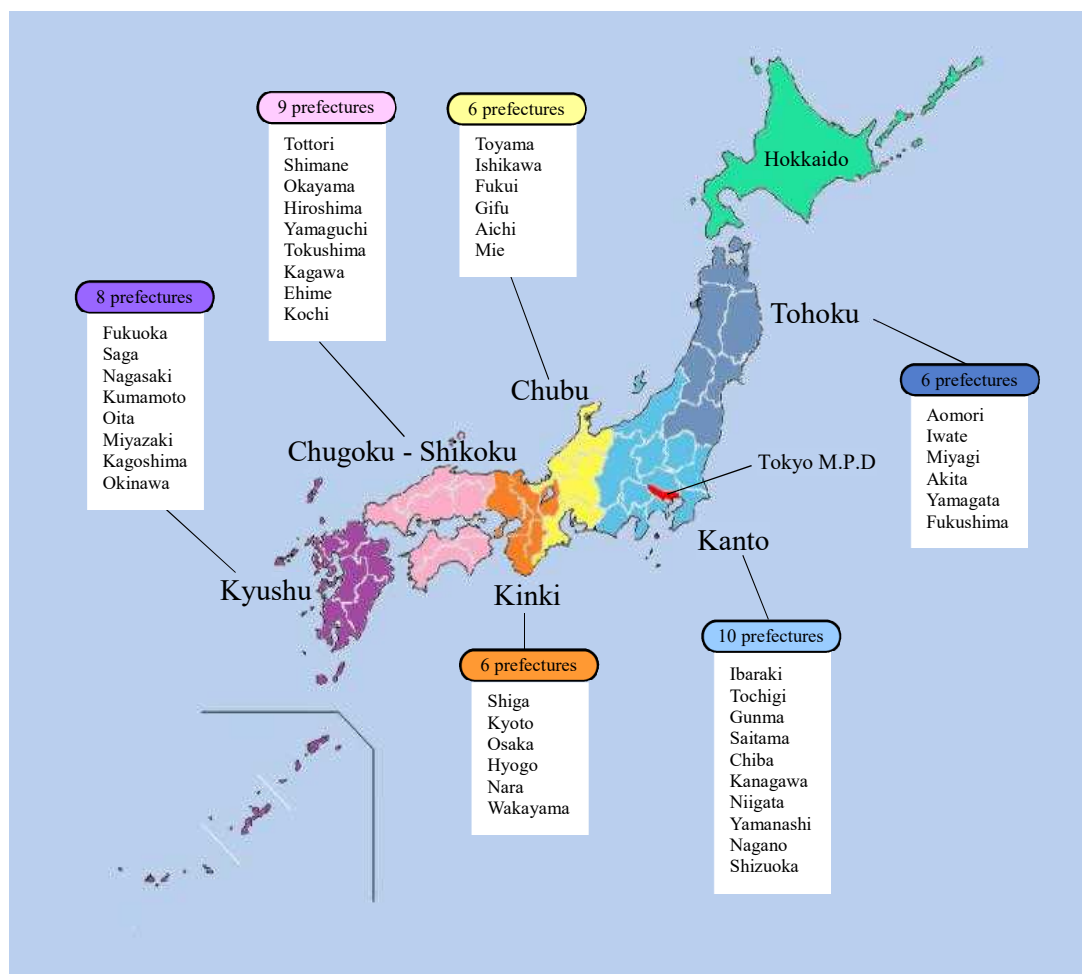
Imperial Guard Headquarters

The National Police Academy provides training to senior police officers and carries out academic research. It has nine training departments including the Community Safety, Criminal Investigation, Traffic, and Security Training Departments. Experts in each department serve as instructors or researchers. Academy sub-units that provide advanced and expert training and conduct research are: the Highest Training Institute for Investigation Leaders, the Research and Training Center for International Criminal Investigation and Police Cooperation, the Police Policy Research Center, the Police Info-Communications Research Center, the Police Info-Communications Academy, the Research and Training Center for Financial Crime Investigation, and the Research and Training Center for Interview and Interrogation Techniques.

The National Research Institute of Police Science conducts research in forensic science and applies the results of such research in the examination and identification of evidence collected during police investigations. It also conducts research on juvenile crime prevention and traffic accidents. The Institute's seven departments are: General Affairs; First, Second, Third and Fourth Forensic Science; Criminology and Behavioral Sciences; and Traffic.

The Imperial Guard Headquarters provides escorts for the Emperor, Empress, Crown Prince and other Imperial Family members. It is also responsible for the security of the Imperial Palace and other Imperial facilities. It consists of the Imperial Police Administration, the Imperial Security and the Imperial Escort departments.

(c) Regional Police Bureaus



Regional Police Bureaus (RPB) are subordinate to the NPA. There are six RPBs nationwide. They are located in major cities of each geographic region. The Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department and the Hokkaido Prefectural Police Headquarters are excluded from the jurisdiction of RPBs.

Headed by a Director General, each RPB exercises necessary control and supervision of and provides support services to the prefectural police within its jurisdiction under the authority and orders of the NPA's Commissioner General.

B. Prefectural Police Structure

The Police Act requires that each prefectural government have its own police organization to carry out police duties within its jurisdiction.

(1) Prefectural Public Safety Commissions

Prefectural Public Safety Commissions (PPSCs) are under the authority of the elected prefectural governors. PPSCs supervise the prefectural police by drawing up the basic policies for police operations and establishing regulations in regard to safety of the public. They are also authorized to issue licenses for adult amusement businesses, firearm possession, and driving. However, neither the PPSCs nor the prefectural governors have powers to intervene in individual investigations or specific law enforcement activities of the prefectural police.

Some PPSCs consist of five members, while others consist of three. Individuals who served as professional public servants in the police or prosecution in the preceding five years may not be appointed as members. Members are appointed by prefectural governors with the consent of prefectural assemblies and serve a three-year term. The members then elect their chairperson among themselves. In PPSCs, a majority of the members may not be appointed from the same political party.

(2) Metropolitan Police Department and Prefectural Police

(a) Organizational Structure and Authority

The **local police force** of Tokyo is the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), while all other prefectures have their own prefectural police. The MPD and prefectural police have identical functions and authorities within their respective jurisdictions.

Obtaining the consent of the Tokyo Public Safety Commission, the NPSC appoints the Superintendent General, the chief of the MPD, with the approval of the Prime Minister. The NPSC appoints the prefectural police chiefs with the consent of the respective PPSCs.

(b) Police Stations, Police Boxes and Residential Police Boxes

The MPD and the prefectural police divide their jurisdictions into districts and place a police station in each of them. As the front-line operational units, the police stations perform their duties in close contact with the local communities.

Police boxes (Koban) and residential police boxes (Chuzai-sho) are subordinate units of the police stations and are located throughout each jurisdiction. They are the focal points of community police activities and play a leading role in maintaining the safety of the local communities.

(c) Relations Among Prefectural Police Organizations

When large-scale incidents or crimes across prefectural borders occur, other prefectural police forces and the NPA render assistance. Prefectural police can also exercise their respective authority in other prefectures for protecting the lives and property of their residents and maintaining the public safety of their prefecture.