

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 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, 2014, along with police headquarters, police academies, and other facilities, there were 1,169 police stations in the 47 prefectural police forces.

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). It also gives guidance to the NPA concerning measures to prevent the various cases of

misconduct by police personnel. During 2013, the NPSC established 16 NPSC rules including the regulation on handling corpses.

Although the NPSC usually convenes regular meetings every week on Thursdays, other than regular meetings, extraordinary meetings, such as the meeting held on September 1, 2013 that accompanied implementation of the 2013 National Police Agency Integrated Disaster Prevention Drill. 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 November 2013, the Chairperson of the NPSC visited the Internet Hotline Center Japan, and was briefed on reports received of unlawful/harmful actions, reports made to police, and circumstances regarding requests for deletion submitted to website administrators.



The Chairperson of the NPSC inspects the Internet Hotline Center Japan

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 Police at regular meetings and other assemblies and giving guidance on incidents and accidents within the jurisdiction, incidence of disasters and subsequent efforts made by the police, 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 August 2013, members of the Kagoshima Prefecture Public Safety Commission members participated in publicity activities in the area where there was suspected abduction of a couple by North Korea (Kagoshima Prefecture), and together with persons such as the families of abduction victims, they handed out informational fliers and stickers to drivers of passing vehicles to appeal for information on the case.



A member of the Kagoshima Prefecture Public Safety Commission asking for information on suspected abduction case (left)

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 2013, PPSCs nationwide received 1,034 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. During 2013, two liaison meetings between the NPSC and all PPSCs nationwide were held, in which views were exchanged concerning the status of police supervision by the PPSCs and other matters.

Additionally, during 2013, in each Regional Police Bureau and in Hokkaido, a total of twelve 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, exchange of views between PPSCs and liaison meetings between the PPSCs of the designated prefectures including Tokyo, Hokkaido, Kyoto, and Osaka were also held.

Case: In October 2013, members of the Fukuoka PPSC visited Shizuoka Prefecture and observed disaster prevention practices at the Shizuoka Prefectural Earthquake Preparedness Education Center and at the Shizuoka Prefectural Police. In addition, Fukuoka and Shizuoka public safety commissions took that opportunity to share their views on how to respond to emergencies such as a large-scale earthquake.



**Members of Public Safety Commissions
from Fukuoka and Shizuoka share views**