

Part 1: Special Feature and Topics

Special Feature: Emergency Preparedness and Response

This Year's Special Feature

The special feature of this year's Police White Paper is "Emergency Preparedness and Response."

In the event of a large-scale disaster, the police are engaged in a wide range of disaster control activities, such as evacuation guidance and rescue operations for victims, various traffic measures, searching for missing persons, autopsies and identity checks, and measures against various crimes in the disaster area. Based on various reflections and lessons learned from responses to past disasters including the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011, the police have been working to improve their response capabilities in the event of large-scale disasters, including the establishment and enhancement of disaster relief operation units and the improvement of equipment and materials. In recent years, however, there have been a series of disasters requiring complex and difficult responses over a long period of time. So, it is necessary to continually check and enhance personnel and material systems so that they can properly respond not only to a Tokyo Inland Earthquake and the Nankai Trough Earthquake, but also to respond to various other situations.

In view of counter-terrorism, the police have taken various measures, such as strengthening the gathering and analysis of information both in Japan and overseas, improving and strengthening Japanese counter-terrorism unit, and promoting public-private partnerships. In recent years, terrorist attacks have occurred in foreign countries by people who have become radicalized under the influence of Internet propaganda by ISIL and AQ (Al-Qaeda) etc., and there have also been some incidents Japanese nationals have been victimized. In addition, the tactics of terrorism have been changing, as can be seen in the attacks using vehicles, knives, etc., and cyber terrorism that paralyzes social functions. It is necessary to take measures according to the situation in Japan, too.

In 2019, large-scale events such as ceremonies associated with the accession to the throne of His Majesty the Emperor, the G20 Osaka Summit, and the Rugby World Cup Japan 2019 were held. Then, in 2020, the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games are to be held, and the police have to take all possible counter-terrorism measures in each event.

In this special feature, Section 1 describes police activities and countermeasures to improve their disaster response capabilities in the event of a large-scale disaster, and Section 2 describes the situation of domestic and overseas terrorism, challenges, and police measures against terrorism. And Section 3 provides an overview of the future police responses to emergencies such as large-scale disasters and terrorist attacks, and describes the Security Operations Department, newly established in 2019 to improve the police's emergency response capabilities.

We hope this special feature helps deepen the citizens' understanding of the roles and efforts of the police in emergencies including large-scale disasters and terrorist attacks, and give a chance to consider effective police activities in emergencies in the future.