



Damage Situation and Government Response to the Northern Kyushu Heavy Rainfall Disaster of July 2017

Cabinet Office

Overview of the rainfall

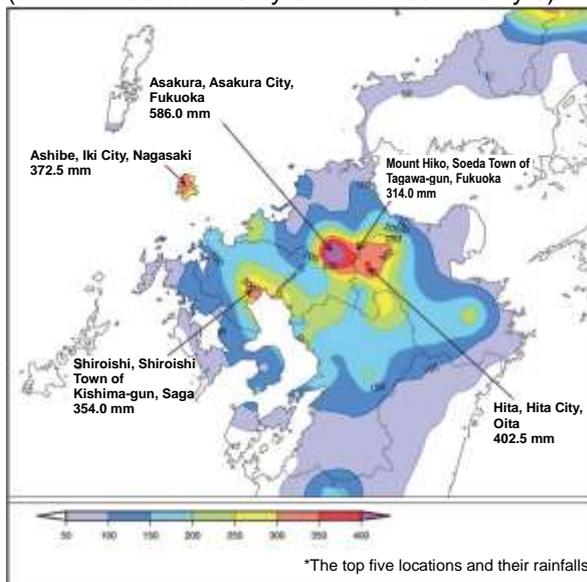
On July 5–6, warm and very humid winds flowed toward a stationary seasonal rain front in the vicinity of the Tsushima Straits, which formed and maintained a linear rainband bringing continued torrential rain to the same location. As a result, northern Kyushu received record rainfall.

In northern Kyushu, the total rainfall for July 5–6 exceeded 500 millimeters at its maximum, and some areas had heavy rain surpassing the normal monthly rainfall of July in just two days. Asakura City, Fukuoka, and Hita City, Oita, recorded new 24-hour rainfall highs as the heavy rain broke previous records.

Outline of the damage

This record heavy rain caused casualties of 37 deaths and 4 missing persons (as of September 29) as well as serious housing damage including many fully- or half-destroyed houses with inundation above floor level, in the two prefectures of Fukuoka and Oita. Great damage was also caused to roads, railways, lifeline utilities such as electricity and water supplies, and agricultural land and facilities which formed the foundation of people's livelihoods. In addition, residential areas and agricultural land were inundated with flood wood resulting from hillside collapses caused by the torrential rain, which generated a large amount of disaster waste including this flood wood and sediment.

Period rainfall distribution map (between 00:00 on July 5 and 24:00 on July 6)



Rainfall timeline chart (between 00:00 on July 5 and 24:00 on July 6)



Top five 24-hour rainfall (between 00:00 on July 5 and 24:00 on July 6)

Rank	Prefecture	Municipality	Place name	Rainfall		
				(mm)	Date	Time
1st	Fukuoka	Asakura City	Asakura	545.5	Jul. 6	11:40
2nd	Oita	Hita City	Hita	370.0	Jul. 6	10:50
3rd	Nagasaki	Iki City	Ashibe	362.5	Jul. 6	24:00
4th	Saga	Shiroishi Town of Kishima-gun	Shiroishi	328.5	Jul. 6	22:30
5th	Oita	Nakatsu City	Yabakei	292.5	Jul. 6	08:40

Map, chart and table source: Japan Meteorological Agency website

The many damaged houses and severed roads in different areas caused more than 2,000 people to become evacuees just after the disaster.



Damaged houses and flood wood
(Asakura City, Fukuoka)



Bridge washed away on the Kyudai Line
(Hita City, Oita)

Government response

Before the Northern Kyushu Heavy Rainfall Disaster, the government, fearing a disaster caused by the seasonal rain front or typhoon No. 3, held a disaster security meeting of the ministries concerned on July 3 to ensure its unified security preparedness, and the Minister of State for Disaster Management called for the people to proactively secure their own safety. As soon as the disaster occurred, the government held meetings involving the relevant cabinet ministers and disaster response meetings daily to assess the damage and share or confirm the government response. The government

also tried to directly assess the damage and problems in the affected areas through dispatching government survey missions led by the former Minister of State for Disaster Management, Jun Matsumoto, and the former Senior Vice-Minister, Yohei Matsumoto, to Fukuoka and Oita respectively, which were devastated, and Prime Minister Abe's visit to the affected areas on July 12. Then, in close cooperation with the municipalities, the government responded together to problems such as rescuing people, improving the living environment in evacuation centers including taking precautions against the heat, and the accelerated treatment of disaster waste including flood wood, which was hindering recovery in affected areas, by dispatching staff in charge from the relevant ministries to the government's on-site liaison and coordination office which was set up in Fukuoka.



Prime Minister Abe, visiting Haki Hoshimaru,
Asakura City (Photo: Provided by Cabinet Public
Relations Office) on July 12



Talks between the then Minister of State for Disaster Management Matsumoto and those affected (July 9)



Minister of State for Disaster Management Okonogi visiting the emergency temporary housing in Asakura City on August 22

Toward recovery and reconstruction

For this disaster, the Disaster Relief Act applied to Asakura City, Toho Village of Asakura-gun, and Soeda Town of Tagawa-gun, Fukuoka, as well as Hita City and Nakatsu City, Oita while the Act Concerning Support for Reconstructing Livelihood of Disaster Victims applied to all municipalities of Fukuoka, and Hita City, Oita.

In light of this, the government dispatched Cabinet Office staff to each site to hold explanatory meetings on utilization of the Disaster Relief Act, and explanatory meetings on the survey for housing damage certification and issues concerning disaster certificates based on the survey results. The government also tried to provide the prefectural governments involved, the affected municipalities and the people with support to ensure immediate housing for victims such as offering emergency temporary housing or emergency repairs to their houses.

In addition, the government, considering this disaster as a series of heavy rain disasters caused by the seasonal rain front that summer, adopted its designation as a serious disaster at a Cabinet meeting on August 8, and promulgated and enforced a government ordinance on August 10. In order to allow the devastated municipalities to promptly work on recovery and reconstruction free of financial worries, the government announced “designation forecasts” for those which met the criteria for serious disaster designation on July 21 without waiting for the end of the national rainy season (August 2).

Furthermore, in order to announce the designation forecasts early, the government cooperated fully with the damage survey. Specifically, it provided technical support by dispatching TEC-FORCE from MLIT and experts in disaster restoration techniques to the affected areas, and assessed the damage situation using drones and aerial photos.

Serious disaster designation and applicable measures for the heavy rain caused by the seasonal rain front that summer including this disaster are as follows.

○ Serious disaster (Hongeki or national) designation and applicable measures

- The following measures were applicable all over the country.

(1) Special measures for subsidizing disaster recovery projects on agricultural land, etc.

(2) Special provisions for subsidizing disaster recovery projects on joint-use facilities in agriculture, forestry and fisheries

(3) Inclusion of principal and interest redemption on small disaster bonds in relation to basic fiscal demand

○ Serious disaster (Kyokugeki or regional) designation and applicable measures

- The following measures were applicable to the four municipalities of Asakura City, Toho Village of Asakura-gun and Soeda Town of Tagawa-gun, Fukuoka, and Hita City, Oita.

(1) Special financial assistance for disaster recovery projects on public works facilities

(2) Inclusion of principal and interest redemption on small disaster bonds in relation to basic fiscal demand

- The following measures were applicable to the two municipalities of Asakura City and Toho Village of Asakura-gun, Fukuoka.

(1) Special provisions for disaster-related guarantees in accordance with the Small Business Credit Insurance Act

▶ Cooperation and collaboration with NPOs

In times of disaster, volunteer groups including NPOs with their techniques, know-how and experience in disaster response come running to the affected areas and provide detailed assistance to the victims. In this disaster, a lot of NPOs also came running to the affected areas.

In order to ensure cooperation and collaboration with these NPOs, a meeting to share information between the government and NPOs sponsored by Japan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (JVOAD) was held at the Fukuoka prefectural government office building on July 9. About 50 people involved in NPOs, Fukuoka prefectural government and Cabinet Office participated in this meeting, which created opportunities to regularly share information including setting up disaster volunteer centers, understanding the needs for supplies, and reporting on activities at the evacuation centers. Triggered by this, “Meetings to share information among supporters during the Northern Kyushu Heavy Rainfall Disaster of July 2017” were held every evening from July 12 in Asakura City. JVOAD, about 20 volunteer groups including NPOs, Fukuoka prefectural government, Asakura City government, the Council of Social Welfare, and Cabinet Office all participated in the meetings to report and coordinate activity areas and details as well as to coordinate mutual complementary activities. Cabinet Office coordinated with the prefectural government, etc. to ensure cooperation and collaboration between the NPOs and the prefectural government.

NPOs’ disaster response activities covered a lot of ground such as providing assistance at evacuation centers, removing sediment and flood wood from houses and agricultural land,

supporting stay-at-home-victims (victims outside the evacuation centers), and supporting temporary housing and private rental housing-turned-temporary housing units. They also provided food and supplies aid as well as supported children and elderly people. Some NPOs had a good track record in providing support during past disasters with enough support know-how to conduct activities while taking advantage of their own strengths.

At the information sharing meetings, a lot of challenges were also presented. There were diverse challenges such as improving the eating environment in evacuation centers (eating space, encouraging a voluntary hot meal service, and adjusting the number of packed meals), improving the bedding (futon or blankets, mattresses, utilization of cardboard beds, etc.), and improving hygiene), creating children's play spaces (play parks), setting up showers and changing rooms, removal of sediment and flood wood from damaged houses and agricultural land, and preventive measures against heat stroke while working. In the information sharing meetings, the attendees also deliberated solutions to these challenges. As a result, various different cooperative approaches were taken.



Removing mud from a house
(Asakura City, Fukuoka)

Conclusion

In Asakura City and Toho Village of Asakura-gun, Fukuoka, part of the construction-type emergency temporary housing was completed and people started to move in, accelerating the speed of recovery of their former lives.

Meanwhile, even as of writing (in late September), more than 50 people still have to live inconvenient lives in the evacuation centers.

We will continue to promote activities toward community reconstruction including the securing of housing for victims, the restoration of infrastructure and the reconstruction of livelihoods.