

The new coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on disaster relief efforts. When an infectious disease is spreading, if evacuation shelters are overcrowded or if there is confusion in field operations, then further spread cannot be prevented. Therefore, new trainings and guidelines focusing on infectious disease control have been developed since the spread of COVID-19. Also, more municipalities throughout Japan have been working together with civic organizations to operate evacuation shelters more efficiently.

When assistance comes from outside of the disaster-affected community, it becomes increasingly important to ensure cooperation between the government and responders and to make sure infection control measures are in place to prevent further spread in the community as well as among responders. To be able to start activities promptly when a disaster strikes, relief workers must take care of their own health by routinely taking body temperatures and undergoing necessary tests before arriving in the affected community.

We have highlighted some websites that offer tips on how you can maximize your efforts not only in times of disaster but also during non-disaster times.

Disasters Preparations During Non-Disaster Times

◆ Cabinet Office Disaster Prevention Site “Minna De Bousai No Page”

<https://www.bousai.go.jp/kyoiku/minna/index.html>

【Disaster Management in Japan, Cabinet Office】

Introduces useful info and know-how for citizens, schools, businesses, neighborhood associations, fire brigades, flood prevention troops, voluntary disaster prevention groups, volunteers, and NPOs regarding disaster prevention efforts.



◆ Red Cross Disaster Prevention Seminars

<https://www.jrc.or.jp/saigai/about/seminar/>

【Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS)】

Introduces JRCS's training programs on preparing for disasters that anyone could experience through videos and pamphlets.



◆ Prepare and Learn: Training Program

<https://pbv.or.jp/seminar/>

【Peace Boat Disaster Relief (PBV)】

Introduces PBV's training programs on disaster prevention, preparation and knowledge needed for participating in disaster relief volunteer activities, and evacuation center management.



General Disaster Information

◆ Disaster Relief Coordination Guidelines

<https://jvoad.jp/guideline/>

【Japan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (JVOAD)】

Compiles guidelines on responses and programs published by government and civic sectors, listed by categories such as coordination, infectious diseases, general activities, and vulnerable populations. “Relief Coordination for Disaster Survivors” and “Coordination by Sector” are essential readings that can help us eliminate oversights and unevenness in responses and effectively deliver necessary aid no matter where in Japan disaster strikes.



◆ Know-How Compilations <https://jvoad.jp/knowhow>

【JVOAD】

Compiles know-how among aid organizations and businesses, acquired and cultivated through past disaster relief efforts. Introduces info on disaster preparedness, disaster relief basics, and case studies.



◆ Useful Sites <https://jvoad.jp/site/>

【JVOAD】

Compiles websites that can serve as references when you are unsure about disaster relief. Also has useful info for those who wish to volunteer.



Activities in Infectious Disease Disasters

◆ Cautions for Entering Disaster-Affected Communities During COVID-19 Spread, 2nd Ver (June 30, 2021)

<https://www.japanplatform.org/info/2021/07/011440.html>

【PDF version】

https://www.japanplatform.org/info/pdf/JPF_covid19_rule.pdf?v=202107

【Japan Platform (JPF)】

Code of conduct formulated by JPF Domestic Disaster Working Group (JPF and member NGOs) for implementing disaster relief activities in disaster-stricken areas in Japan. Introduces compliance issues when providing response during infectious disease spread. Contents updated as needed.



International Standards

◆ The Sphere Handbook 2018: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

https://jqan.info/sphere_handbook_2018/

【Japan Quality and Accountability Network (JQAN)】

The handbook compiles the humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response, based on reflection and discussion among NGOs and humanitarian responders. Revised every few years and put in practice around the world. Offers both minimum and technical standards for saving lives while improving the quality of aid and accountability in disaster relief. Available for download in both English and Japanese from JQAN's webpage.



◆ Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)

<https://jqan.info/documents/chs/>

【JQAN】

■ Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)

Outlines the Nine Commitments that organizations and individuals providing humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and efficiency of their response. Also includes specific descriptions of key actions as well as organizational responsibilities for improving quality.

■ CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators

This document is useful in examining challenges faced when implementing the Nine Commitments in aid activities, measuring outcomes, and promoting learning and improvement. Both CHS and Guidance notes are available for download in Japanese and English.



◆ PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Harassment) Implementation Quick Reference Handbook, Japanese Version

<https://www.japanplatform.org/info/2021/05/241850.html>

■ Video “No Excuse for Abuse: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Action” with Japanese subtitles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNkYV2UQvME>

【JPF】

Not only of concern in overseas aid but also with disaster relief in Japan, this issue needs to be more widely known domestically. The handbook is designed to help all aid organizations operating in Japan and abroad learn how to maintain a policy on harassment and to practice it every day.



Kumamoto Earthquake Response Documents

◆ Panasonic-KVOAD Pro Bono Project

<https://www.kvoad.com/>

【Kumamoto Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (KVOAD)】

Panasonic NPO Support Pro Bono Project, a collaboration between a business and an NPO, extracted key words (e.g. hot meal distribution, mental health care, tarps) from a year and a half's worth of minutes from the Hinokuni Kaigi, a regularly-held conference for response providers, since right after the earthquake. Key words are organized chronologically, analyzed, and created into a database, which shows how the keywords on the conference agenda changed with the passage of time, providing valuable hints in anticipating needs through the different post-disaster phases.



■ KVOAD Website “Panasonic-KVOAD Pro Bono Project

(See right side on computer, bottom on smartphones)

• Final Report: Project Summary

• List of issues raised in each Kumamoto Earthquake-related conference proceedings: Keyword-searchable Excel spreadsheet

• Panasonic pro bono website: Panasonic Group's corporate citizenship activity

“Passing On the Footprints and Know-How from Kumamoto Earthquake Relief

Efforts: A project to organize and analyze records for KVOAD”

◆ Documenting the Kumamoto Earthquake Response

<https://www.japanplatform.org/programs/kyushu-disaster2016/documents.html>

【JPF】

Booklet compiling training programs for NPOs, neighborhood associations, other aid groups, and government officials engaged in disaster reconstruction activities. Contains knowledge and experiences provided by lecturers who were involved in reconstruction efforts after large disasters in Japan such as the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Niigata Chuetsu Earthquake, and the Great East Japan Earthquake, along with specific case studies.



◆ Four Booklets Compiling Lessons Learned from Disaster Relief in the Kumamoto Municipalities

<https://www.japanplatform.org/programs/kyushu-disaster2016/documents2021.html>

【JPF】

For three terms, JPF provided grants to local intermediary support organizations at the municipal level (city, town, village) that connected disaster survivors, aid groups, and governments as part of the project to build community power and capacity in the disaster-hit areas. Intermediary support groups in four municipalities (Ozu Town, Kumamoto City, Mashiki Town, and Mifune Town) reflect on their own activities from the beginning of the disaster and have put their findings together. Booklets provide concrete examples of how various actors in each municipality connected with each other to deliver seamless support to the survivors.

