
Changes in Traffic Safety Policies and Regulations in Japan (1950–2010)

1. Introduction

Japan's economic recovery in the aftermath of the Second World War and its rapid economic development thereafter have been called "an Asian miracle," placing Japan in a position of leadership in the world economy and bringing unprecedented prosperity, both materially and spiritually, to the Japanese people. Road transportation has undergone extensive motorization and played a major role in Japan's economic growth by enabling movement of both people and goods.

Improvements to Japan's roadway infrastructure, however, have not always kept pace with rapid increases in traffic volume. In 1956, a report submitted to the Japanese government by a group of experts headed by Ralph J. Watkins characterized Japan's roadways with the frank statement: "The roads of Japan are incredibly bad. No other industrial nation has so completely neglected its road system."

With economic growth comes increased traffic volume, which in turn leads to increased traffic accidents. This is a pattern that has been observed in all countries worldwide. Any country that experiences rapid economic growth as Japan did will be hard pressed not to repeat this experience. Yet, within this process are elements unique to Japan's situation. Despite the rapid pace at which Japan's traffic volume increased, not only were the existing roadway infrastructure and traffic safety facilities woefully inadequate, a lack of financial resources meant that only a limited number of slowly-proceeding improvements could be made. Tax revenues earmarked for roadway construction was first established in 1954, and in 1957 financing from the World Bank enabled the start of construction for a series of expressways that were intended to open in time for the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. Despite all this, however, there was little funding available for improvements to traffic safety facilities. The result was rapid increases in both injuries and fatalities due to traffic accidents.

This trend was finally reversed around 1970, at which point injuries and fatalities due to traffic accidents in Japan began to decrease. With the allocation of funding specifically for the enhancement of traffic safety, programs to improve traffic safety facilities nationwide were at last implemented. Additionally, law enforcement throughout Japan also continued its efforts, which had begun during the 1960s or even earlier, to stem the sharp increase in traffic accidents. In these efforts can also be seen a resourceful approach by postwar municipal police departments toward the adoption of policies that would contravene the draconian image created by the Peace Preservation Police and the Security Police during the prewar era. In fact, it is difficult to overstate the extent to which traffic safety policy is associated with postwar democratic law enforcement. This particular point, which municipal police departments nationwide struggled incessantly with at a time when the image of prewar police remained ingrained in much of the general public, is something that many developing countries would do well to consider in the formulation of traffic safety policy.

Throughout the rest of this paper, I will use a variety of statistics to illustrate historical trends in traffic accidents and the effect they had on the development of Japan's traffic safety policies up to the present time.

2. Basic Traffic Safety Statistics

2.1 Japan's Population

According to the National Census, Japan's population in 2010 was 128 million, including non-Japanese residents, which is a slight increase over the previous census taken in 2005. Looking only at Japanese nationals, we see a slight decrease during this same time frame of approximately 37,000 people. This is the first time since the National Census began that the native population has shown a decrease, and as many have noted, Japan's population has peaked and is about to enter an era of negative growth.

Figure 1 shows Japan's population and growth rate during the postwar era. Although Japan's population during the prewar era did not reach the 80 million mark, the influx of postwar returnees helped boost it over that figure in 1948, after which it continued to grow rapidly, reaching 90 million in 1956, 100 million in 1967, and 1.2 million in 1984.

In contrast, even as the population continued to grow, the population growth rate showed a tendency to decline, and although it averaged approximately 1.1% throughout the 1970s, it fell to 0.5% in the 1980s, 0.2% in the 1990s, and to 0% during the first decade of the 21st century.

Looking at demographic age distribution, we see that Japan's population is aging faster than any other country in the world. The graying of Japan's population, as measured by the percentage of the population that is 65 years of age or older, had reached 23.1% in the 2010 National Census, and statistics issued by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research indicate that this is expected to reach nearly 40% by 2050, as shown in Figure 2. In fact, protection of the elderly is a major topic of concern in the planning of traffic safety policies in Japan, and in the not too distant future, Japan's initiatives in this area could serve as models for similar policies in other countries that must deal with declining populations.

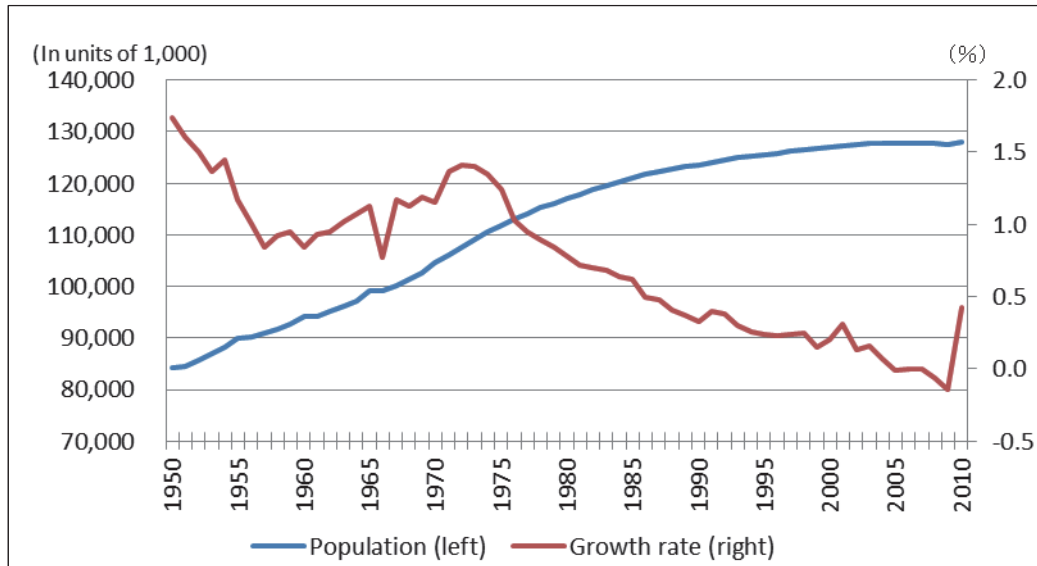


Figure 1 Population growth and growth rate in Japan from 1950 to 2010

Source: Japan Statistical Yearbook 2011 published by the Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications pp.

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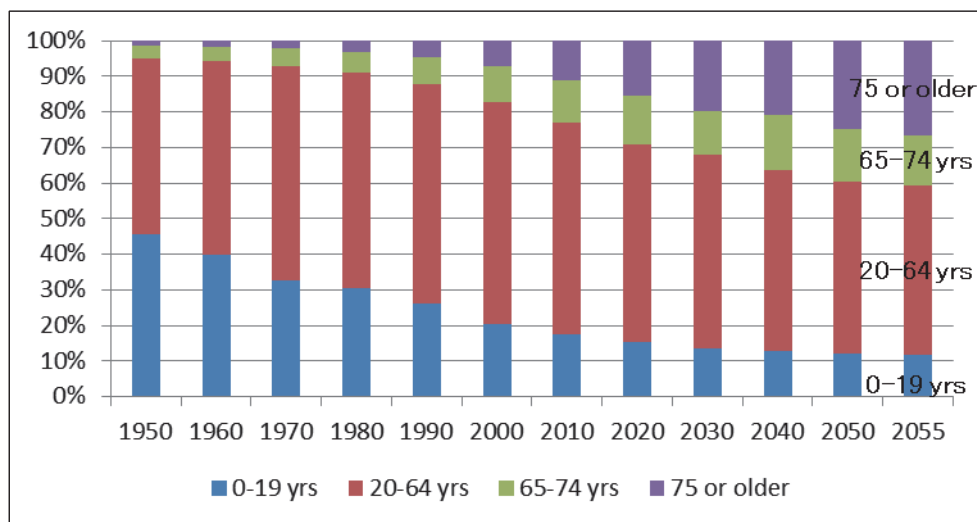


Figure 2 Historical population age distribution in Japan from 1950 to 2010 with predictions to 2055

Source: National Institute of Population and Social Security Research Website (<http://www.ipss.go.jp>) Population Statistics II, Population by Age, Table 2-9 Actual and Projected Population by Age: 1920-2055(in Japanese)

2.2 Road and Highway Lengths

Figure 3 shows the total length of public roads and highways in Japan, which comprises nationally-maintained highways, prefecturally-maintained roadways, and municipally-maintained roads. In the 1950s, the total length of all public roads and highways had exceeded 900,000 km and had been extended to over 1.2 million km by the end of FY2009. Since 1954, maintenance and improvement of these roads has been provided for by tax revenues earmarked for roadway construction, which is a major factor in this growth.

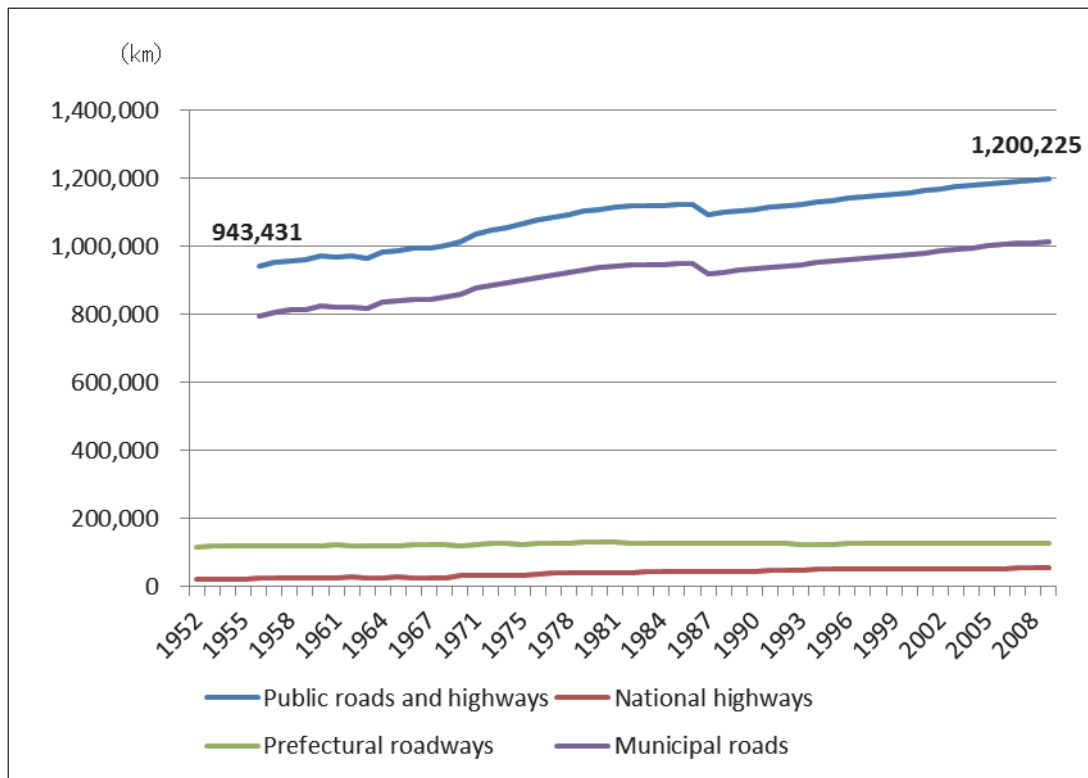


Figure 3 Public road and highway construction from FY1952 to FY2009

Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Website, Road and Traffic Yearbook 2011, (<http://www.mlit.go.jp/road/ir/ir-data/tokei-nen/index.html>) (in Japanese)

Note: The figures used do not reflect lengths of overlapping routes, routes not in service, or ferry routes.

Figure 4 shows the total length of expressways in service. Starting with the 1963 opening of the Meishin (Nagoya–Kōbe) Expressway, construction of new expressways in Japan has continued steadily year by year and reached a total length of 7,642 km by the end of FY2009.

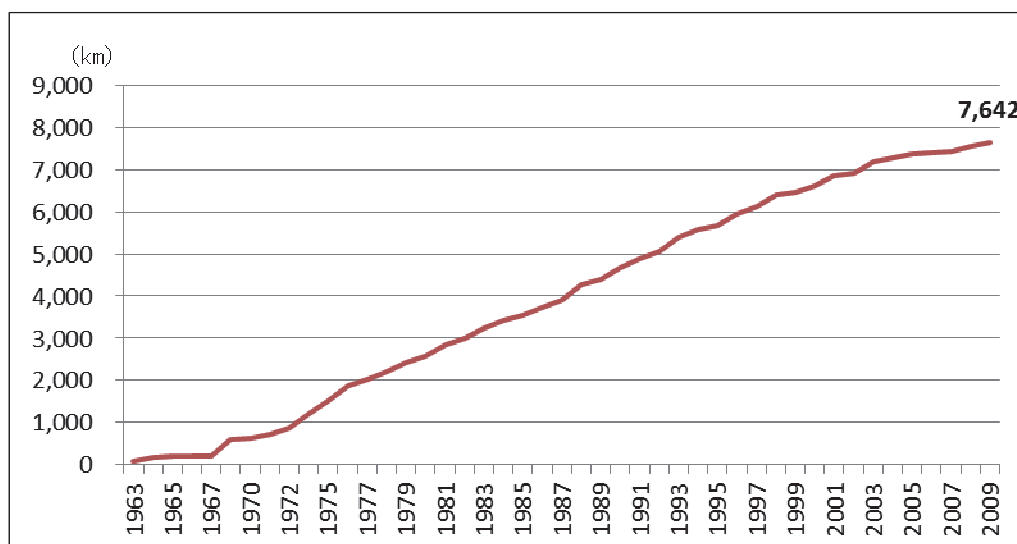


Figure 4 Expressway construction from FY1963 to FY2009

Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Website, Road and Traffic Yearbook 2011, (<http://www.mlit.go.jp/road/ir/ir-data/tokei-nen/index.html>) (in Japanese)

2.3 Number of Motor Vehicle Ownership

Figure 5 shows changes in ownership of motor vehicles during the period from 1956 to 2009, and Table 1 shows the rate of change over most of that period expressed in five-year increments. In consumer theory, motor vehicles are generally considered to be superior goods, which means that demand increases as income rises, but increased income from Japan's sharp economic growth meant that, irrespective of slight disruptions such as the 1974 oil shock, ownership of motor vehicles increased rapidly during this period.¹

Ownership of automobiles saw double-digit growth annually until 1970, as did motorcycles until 1965. 1966, in particular, became known as the First Year of the Family Car, with Japanese automakers launching new-model mass-market cars one after the other, vastly expanding car ownership in Japan. Entering the 1970s, however, car ownership began to grow more slowly, and growth from 1990 onward has declined steadily, with annual averages of 2.11%, 1.09%, and 0.57% for the three five-year periods from 1991 to 2005.

Although mopeds were extremely popular as an inexpensive mode of transportation during the late 1970s and early 1980s, motorcycle ownership in general has declined steadily over the course of the four five-year periods since 1986. Rapid increases in the number of accidents involving mopeds led to mandatory use of helmets starting in 1986.

¹ In 1956, the Annual Economic Report contained a passage that has become famous as an example of the rhetoric of era: *We have left the "postwar" behind and are now about to face an entirely new situation. Our economic recovery is now complete. Future growth will be supported by modernization. The advances of modernization will in turn be achieved through rapid and stable economic growth.* From this time on, the Japanese economy has undergone multiple cycles of expansion and contraction but has continued to grow rapidly

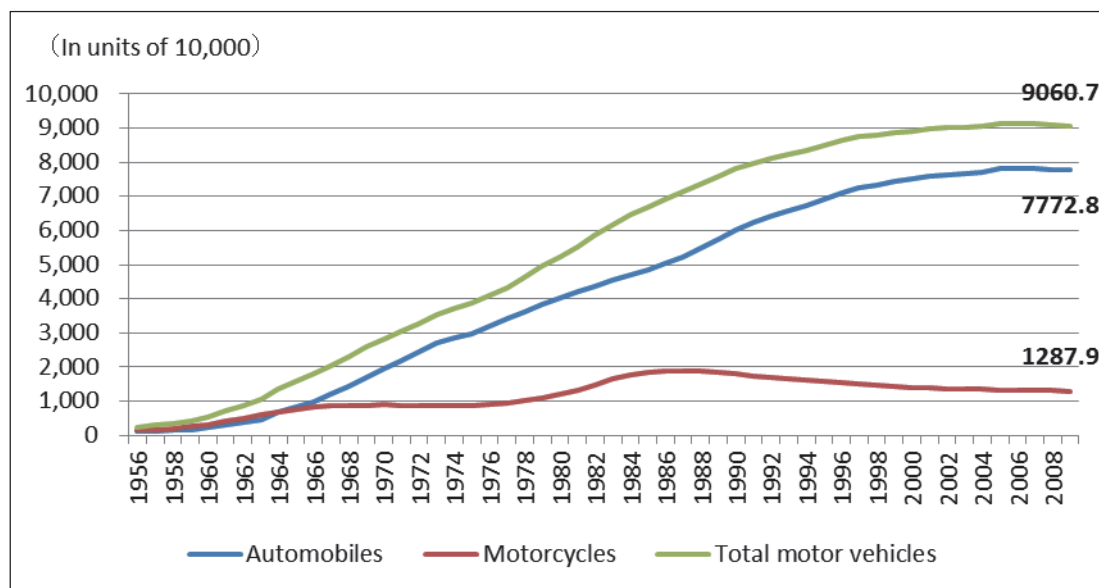


Figure 5 Motor vehicle ownership from 1956 to 2009

Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Motor Vehicle Ownership Monthly

Table 1 Rate of change of motor vehicle ownership (%)

Year	Automobiles	Motorcycles	Total Motor Vehicles
1956–60	15.72	18.11	17.09
1961–65	23.16	13.21	17.72
1966–70	14.72	1.65	9.53
1971–75	6.54	-0.13	4.79
1976–80	4.69	6.20	5.03
1981–85	2.98	6.81	3.95
1986–90	3.59	-1.04	2.41
1991–95	2.11	-2.09	1.25
1996–2000	1.09	-1.71	0.62
2001–05	0.57	-0.77	0.37

Source: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Motor Vehicle Ownership Monthly

2.4 Number of Individuals Holding a Driver’s License

According to the National Police Agency, 81 million people held a driver’s license in Japan during 2010, which is 3.3 times the number of license holders there were when the driver’s license management system began collecting statistical data in 1969. Except for a brief rise in the late 1970s, however, the growth rate has been declining steadily, and it has fallen to nearly 0% in recent years. Figure 6 shows the number of individuals holding a driver’s license and the growth rate of that number from 1969 to 2010.

Looking at age distribution, in 2010, 16% of all individuals holding a driver's license were 65 years of age or older, and this number is expected to increase. It will become increasingly important to take measures to reduce the opportunity for the elderly to drive, such as a program to encourage voluntary relinquishment of driver's licenses, as part of traffic safety policies specifically for elderly drivers.

Moreover, there are currently two programs for the elderly: markers for elderly drivers and courses for the elderly. The former program has been proven to contribute to traffic safety, but the effectiveness of the latter remains unclear (Sugimoto, 2012)

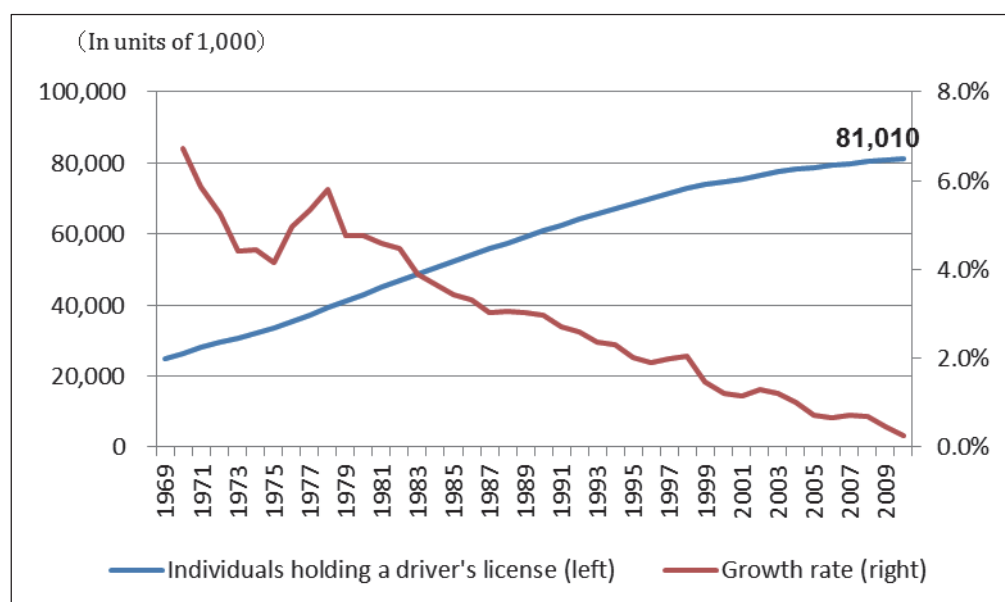


Figure 6 Number of individuals holding a driver's license and growth rate from 1969 to 2010

Source: Page 1 of Driver's License Statistics 2010, published in 2011 by Driver's License Dept., National Police Agency

2.5 Number of Fatalities and Injuries due to Traffic Accidents

Figure 7 shows fatalities due to traffic accidents in Japan from 1950 to 2010. The rapid increase in motor vehicle ownership that began in the 1950s was accompanied by a rapid increase in fatalities due to traffic accidents. For example, there were 8,200 traffic fatalities in 1958, more than 10,000 in 1959, and more than 12,000 in 1960. Despite a brief respite immediately thereafter, the number of traffic fatalities generally continued to escalate rapidly, reaching a record high of 16,765 in 1970, which still stands as the worst year ever in Japan. The latter half of the 1960s in particular, which became known as the "First Traffic War" witnessed dramatic increases in the number of both traffic accidents, as seen in Figure 11, and fatalities.

This led to a public call for policies to reduce traffic accidents, which resulted in the Traffic Safety Policies Basic Act being passed into law in 1970.² This Act also served as the basis on which the

² The objective of this Act, as given in its first article, is to contribute to the enhancement of public welfare through comprehensive and systematic promotion of traffic safety policies, by clarifying the responsibilities of national and local public service organizations as well as of both passengers and operators of motor vehicles, marine vessels, and aircraft with regard to traffic safety, establishing basic structures needed for traffic safety through national and local public service

Central Traffic Safety Policy Council issued the First Traffic Safety Basic Action Plan in 1971. Since that time, new plans have been drafted every five years, and 2011 saw issuance of the Ninth Traffic Safety Basic Action Plan.

With the issuance of Traffic Safety Basic Action Plans and the joint cooperation of the public and private sectors in implementing traffic safety measures, the targets specified in each five-year plan had helped reduce traffic fatalities to just over 8,000 by 1979, or roughly half of the figure for 1970. The effect was temporary, however, and traffic fatalities began to rise yet again, reaching the 10,000 mark for a second time in 1988 and continuing to rise until 1992. But the trend has been downward since that time, reaching 4,863 in 2010 and 4,611 in 2011, which marked the 11th consecutive year in which traffic fatalities had declined.

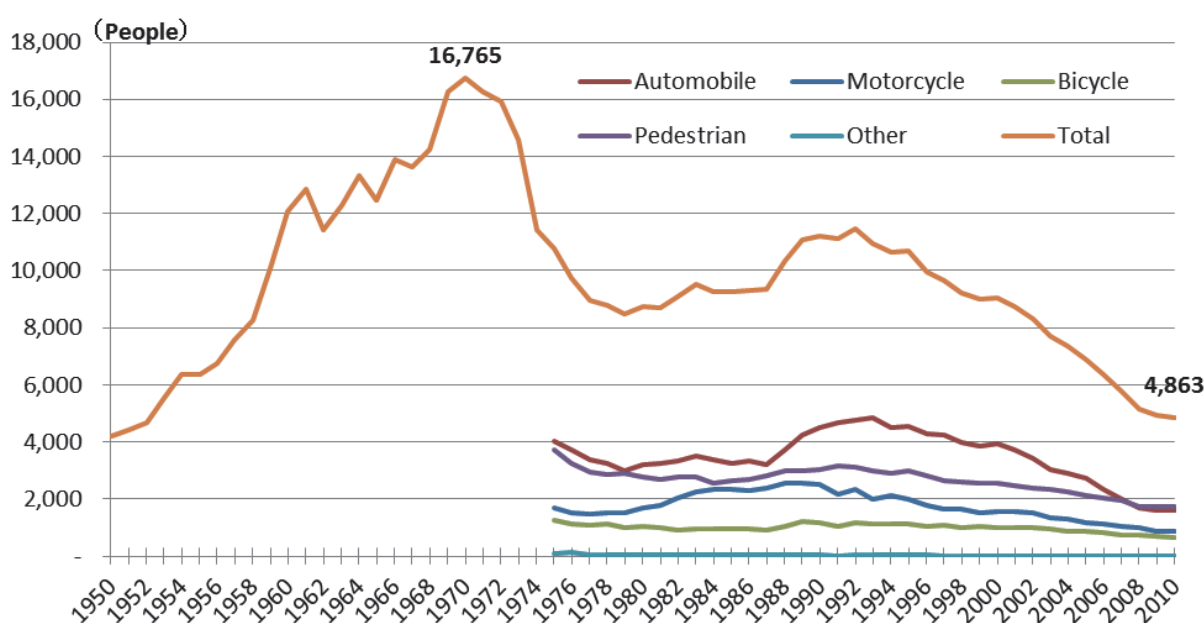


Figure 7 Fatalities (within 24 hours) due to traffic accidents from 1950 to 2010

Source: Traffic Accident Statistics published annually by the Traffic Bureau of the National Police Agency

The 9th Traffic Safety Basic Action Plan, drafted in 2011, identified the following characteristics of traffic fatalities in recent years:

- (1) As shown in Table 2, traffic fatalities in which the victim was 65 years of age or older continue at a high rate, comprising half of all fatalities. In more than 60% of these, the elderly victim was a pedestrian or was riding a bicycle. Also, the number of fatal accidents involving elderly drivers has increased in recent years.
- (2) Fatalities of youths between the ages of 16 and 24 have dropped significantly, especially in terms of deaths of passengers.
- (3) Compared with North America and Europe, the percentage of traffic fatality victims who were pedestrians or riding bicycles is high.

organizations, and providing for the establishment of traffic safety planning and other measures to be implemented by national and local public service organizations .

- (4) The number of fatal accidents involving speeding violations or driving under the influence of alcohol is declining.

Other reasons given for recent declines in traffic fatalities include the effects of improvements to roadway and traffic control facilities, diffusion and thoroughness of traffic safety education, greater awareness and implementation of defensive driving techniques, enhanced safety features on motor vehicles, continued enforcement of and compliance with traffic safety laws, and improvements to emergency response. Major factors that can be defined quantitatively include the following:

- (1) Reduced incidence of malicious or irresponsible behavior such as driving under the influence of alcohol
- (2) Reduced incidence of fatalities among automobile passengers, attributed to increased use of seat belts
- (3) Enhanced hazard perception at lower speeds (vehicle speeds immediately prior to accidents)
- (4) Reduced incident of jaywalking and other violations by pedestrians
- (5) Enhanced safety features on motor vehicles

Table 2 Traffic fatalities by age for 2010

15 yrs. or younger	16–24 yrs.	25–29 yrs.	30–39 yrs.	40–49 yrs.	50–59 yrs.	60–64 yrs.	65 yrs. or older	Total
111	469	198	378	395	489	373	2,450	4,863
2.3%	9.6%	4.1%	7.8%	8.1%	10.1%	7.7%	50.4%	100%

Source: Page 10 of the Traffic Safety Report, published by the Cabinet Office in 2011

In 1993, the National Police Agency, recognizing a need both to track fatalities caused by traffic accidents for more than just 24 hours and to make accurate comparisons with statistics from other countries, began to compile statistics on fatalities after the first 24 hours but within 30 days of the accident. Total fatalities from 1993 to 2010 are shown in Table 3 and classified as being within 24 hours (A) and within 30 day (B). Although B is naturally larger than A, the ratio B/A has been relatively steady at a value of between 1.15 and 1.20.

Table 3 Traffic fatalities within 24 hour and within 30 days from 1993 to 2010

	Fatalities within 24 hours (A)	Fatalities within 30 days (B)	B/A
1993	10,942	13,269	1.21
1994	10,649	12,768	1.20
1995	10,679	12,670	1.19
1996	9,942	11,674	1.17
1997	9,640	11,254	1.17
1998	9,211	10,805	1.17
1999	9,006	10,372	1.15
2000	9,066	10,403	1.15
2001	8,747	10,060	1.15
2002	8,326	9,575	1.15
2003	7,702	8,877	1.15
2004	7,358	8,492	1.15
2005	6,871	7,931	1.15
2006	6,352	7,272	1.14
2007	5,744	6,639	1.16
2008	5,155	6,023	1.17
2009	4,914	5,772	1.17
2010	4,863	5,745	1.18

Source: Traffic Safety Report, published annually by the Cabinet Office

Figure 8 shows injuries from traffic accidents. As with traffic fatalities, the number of injuries due to traffic accidents reached a peak in 1970, declined until 1977, but peaked again during the early 2000s.³

³ With traffic deaths once again passing the 10,000 mark, the years from 1988 onward, during which numerous traffic safety policies were implemented, became known as the “Second Traffic War,” just as the 1970s had been known as the “First Traffic War.” For example, both stronger penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol enacted in 2001 as well as the establishment of mandatory imprisonment for dangerous driving resulting in vehicular manslaughter in 2007 have clearly had a major effect.

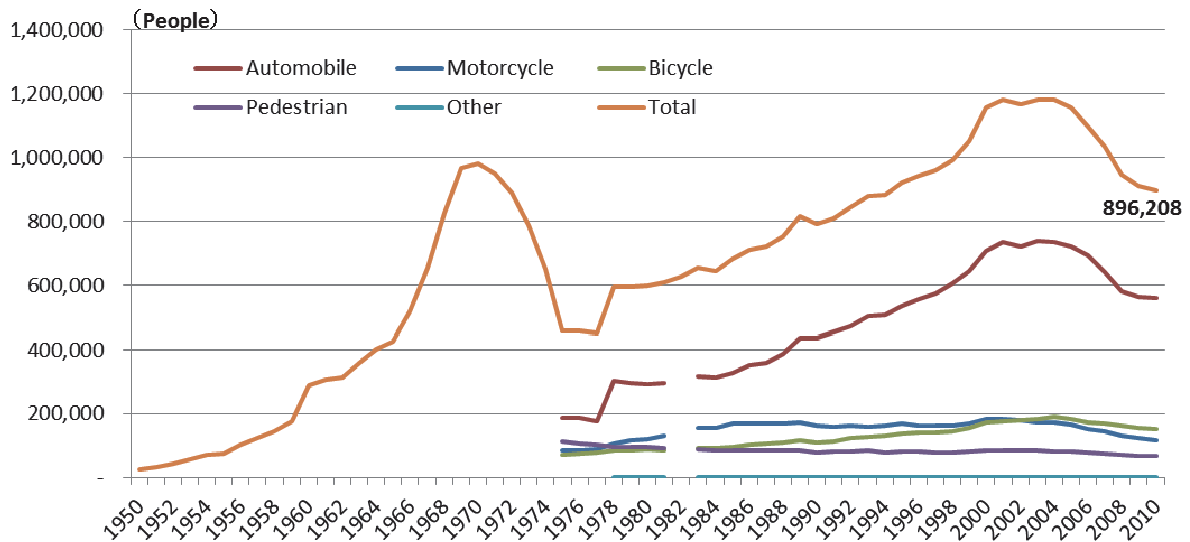


Figure 8 Injuries due to traffic accidents from 1950 to 2010

Source: Traffic Accident Statistics published annually by the Traffic Bureau of the National Police Agency

Note: Data other than Total was unavailable for 1982

Looking at changes in the number of fatalities and injuries due to traffic accidents, we see that, from the 1990s on, major reductions in the number of fatalities have been accompanied by increases in the number of injuries, and that although the percentage of passengers who become fatalities in traffic accidents has decreased, the percentage of pedestrians who become fatalities has increased, as shown in Figure 9. Also, the percentage of passengers as well as the percentage of people riding bicycles who suffer injuries due to traffic accidents has increased, as shown in Figure 10.

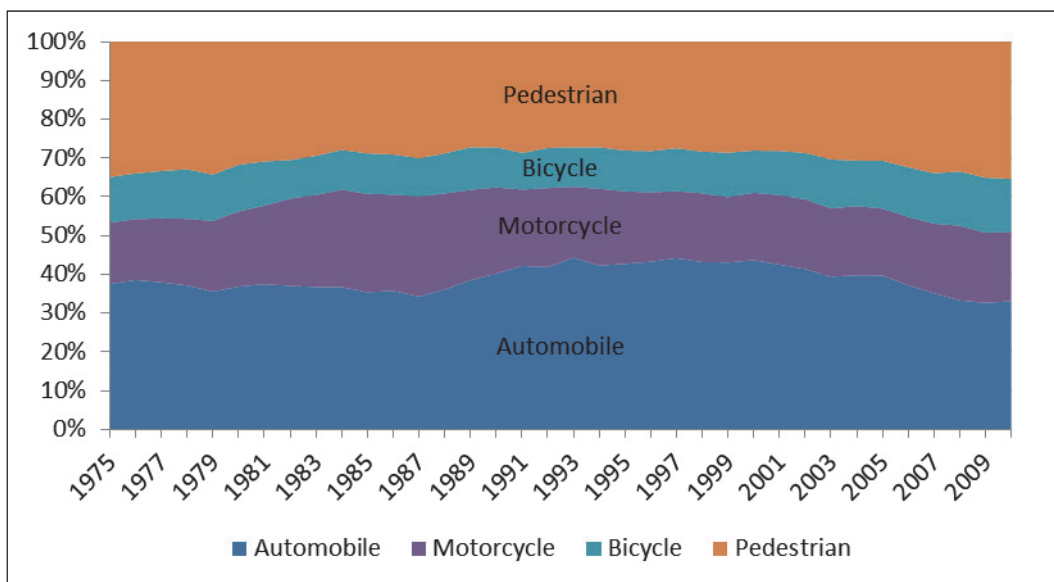


Figure 9 Breakdown of fatalities due to traffic accidents from 1975 to 2010

Source: Traffic Accident Statistics published annually by the Traffic Bureau of the National Police Agency

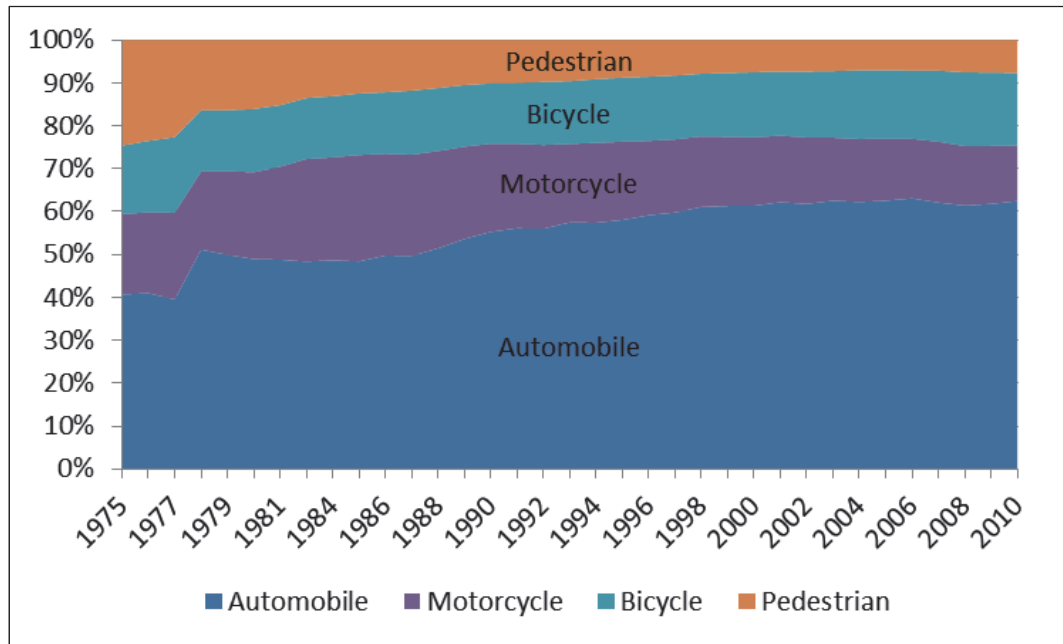


Figure 10 Breakdown of injuries due to traffic accidents from 1975 to 2010

Source: Traffic Accident Statistics published annually by the Traffic Bureau of the National Police Agency

Note: Data for 1982 unavailable

2.6 Number of Traffic Accidents

Figure 11 shows the number of accidents as well as fatalities and injuries per 10,000 vehicles from 1950 to 2010. The number of traffic accidents peaked in 1969 at slightly more than 720,000. Although this number initially dropped in the following years, from the 1980s on, Japan witnessed a slow and steady climb that eventually exceeded 950,000 in 2004, which was the worst year on record. Since that time, there has been a downward trend that dropped to 725,000 in 2010.

Fatalities and injuries per 10,000 vehicles have remained stable at a relatively low level since the 1970s, and figures of 0.6 and 113.3, respectively, were recorded in 2010.

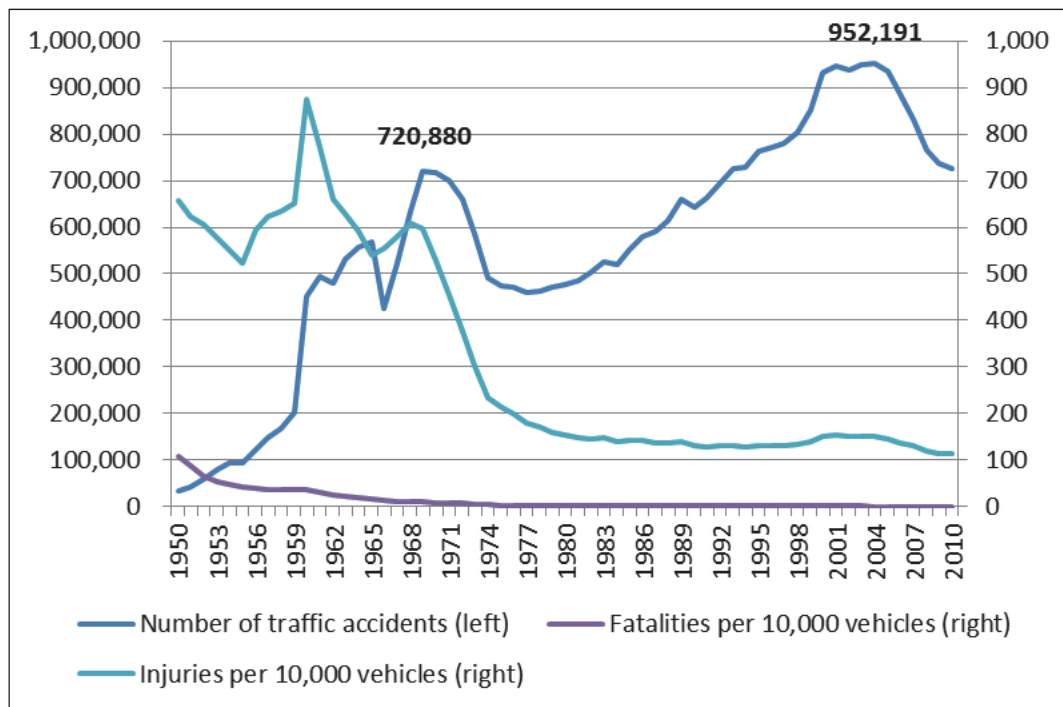


Figure 11 Number of accidents as well as fatalities and injuries per 10,000 vehicles from 1950 to 2010

Source: Page 1 of the Traffic Accident Statistical Yearbook 2010, published by the Institute for Traffic Accident Research and Data Analysis in 2011

3. Governments Agencies and Research Institutions Involved in Traffic Safety

3.1 National Programs for Promoting Traffic Safety

(1) Central Traffic Safety Policy Council

Under the provisions of the Traffic Safety Policies Basic Act, which passed into law in 1970, the Prime Minister's Office established a Central Traffic Safety Policy Council, which was later moved to the jurisdiction of the Cabinet Office in 2001. This Council, which is chaired by the prime minister, comprises the chief cabinet secretary, the heads of specified government agencies, and other ministers of state for special missions as named by the prime minister and is responsible for promoting the drafting and implementation of Traffic Safety Basic Action Plans.

(2) Traffic Policy Institute

In 1960, the Traffic Accident Prevention Policy Institute, which had been a part of the cabinet since its inception in 1955, was dissolved and reorganized under its present name as part of the Prime Minister's Office. Later, in 1984, it was transferred to the Management and Coordination Agency. The Institute is responsible for promoting policies specified in Traffic Safety Basic Action Plans as well as for the planning and promoting of other important comprehensive policies related to traffic safety.

(3) General coordination of traffic safety measures and administration

With the passing into law of the Traffic Safety Policies Basic Act in 1970, the Overland Traffic Safety Survey Office, which had been established as part of the Prime Minister's Office in 1965, was reorganized as the Traffic Safety Policy Office. Later, in 1984, it was transferred to the Management and Coordination Agency. During reorganization of the central ministries in 2001, most of the duties performed by the Traffic Safety Policy Office as part of the Management and Coordination Agency were transferred to the office of the Director-General for Policies on Cohesive Society Planning in the Cabinet Office. Accordingly, the director-general is now responsible for administration of planning and proposals necessary to promote unification of government measures for ensuring traffic safety as well as general coordination and administration of the drafting and promoting of Traffic Safety Basic Action Plans.

3.2 Prefectural and Municipal Programs for Promoting Traffic Safety

(1) Prefectural Traffic Safety Policy Councils

The Traffic Safety Policies Basic Act provides for the establishment of Prefectural Traffic Safety Policy Councils in each prefecture as well as for the voluntary establishment of Municipal Traffic Safety Policy Councils in municipalities that wish to establish them. These Councils are responsible for promoting deliberation and implementation of comprehensive measures related to overland traffic safety as well as the drafting and implementation of traffic safety plans.

(2) Prefectural Traffic Policy Institutes

Prefectural Traffic Policy Institutes are established in each prefecture to function in a manner corresponding to the national Traffic Policy Institute.

(3) General coordination of traffic safety measures and administration

These prefectural and municipal organizations are to establish traffic policy departments, traffic safety policy offices, and other agencies as necessary to coordinate administration and comprehensive promotion of traffic safety policies on their behalf.

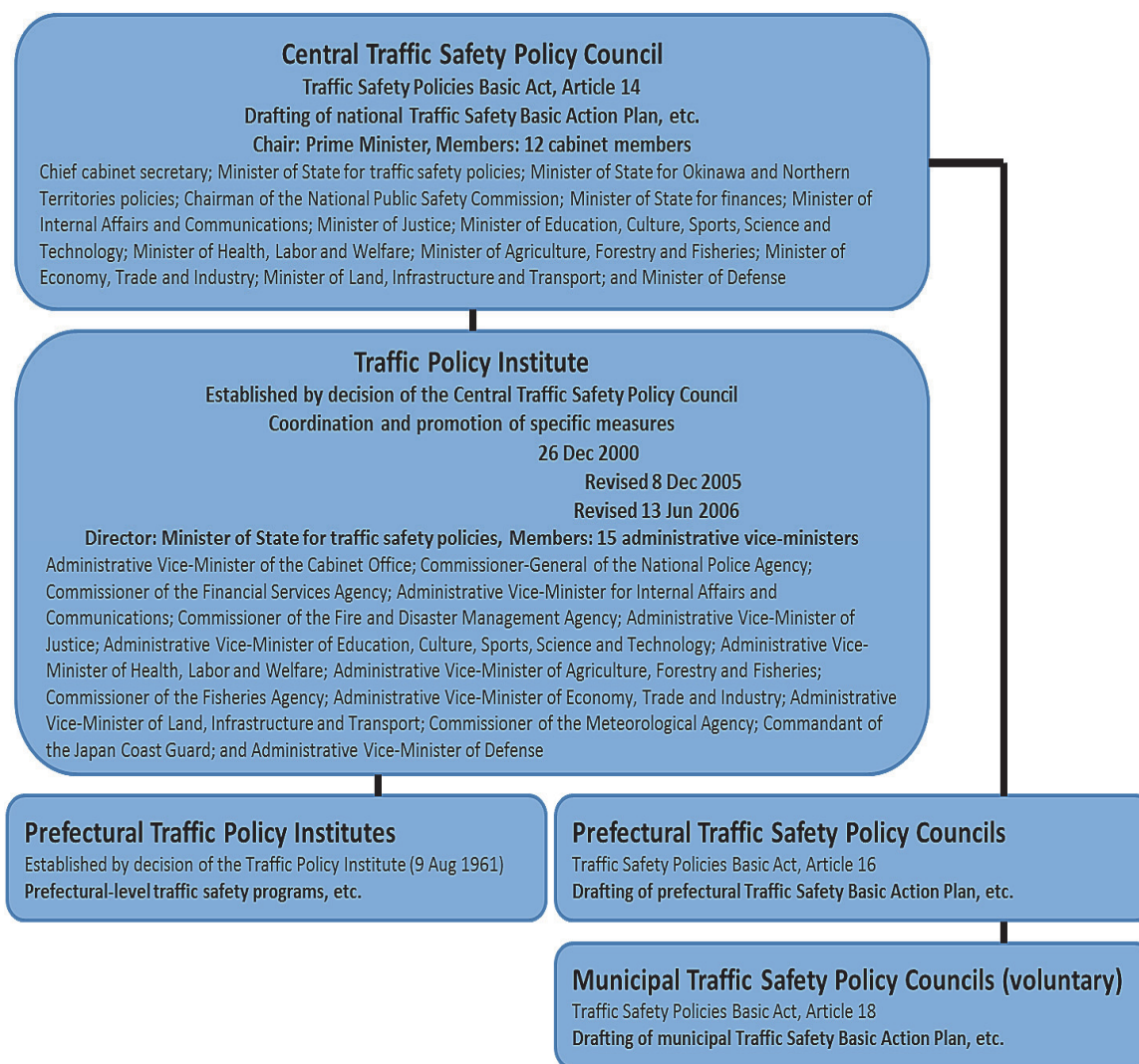


Figure 12 National, prefectural, and municipal programs for promoting traffic safety

Source: Cabinet Office Website (<http://www8.cao.go.jp/koutu/taisaku/suishin.html>) (in Japanese)

3.3 Major Research Institutions Involved in Traffic Safety

(1) Institute for Traffic Accident Research and Data Analysis (ITARDA)

Established in 1992 under the auspices of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, ITARDA performs comprehensive survey research on topics related to traffic accidents and their relationship to humans, road traffic conditions, and motor vehicles. URL: <http://www.itarda.or.jp/english/>

(2) National Agency for Automotive Safety and Victim's Aid (NASVA)

Established in 2003 under the auspices of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, NASVA provides services related to the prevention of motor vehicle accidents and the promotion of aid to victims of traffic accidents. URL: <http://www.nasva.go.jp/mamoru/en/>

(3) National Research Institute of Police Science (NRIPS)

Established in 1959 as an affiliated organization of the National Police Agency, NRIPS provides a wide range of services related to forensic sciences, crime prevention, and the prevention of traffic accidents. URL: <http://www.npa.go.jp/nrips/en/index.html>

4. Changes in Traffic Safety Policies

Traffic safety policies in Japan can be generally classified into one of four categories: investment in traffic safety facilities, improvement of the driver's license system, traffic safety education, and enforcement of traffic rules. Of these, full-fledged investment in traffic safety facilities began in the late 1960s, while earlier policies focused on the remaining three categories. The one requiring the most effort, however, was enforcement of traffic rules. Given that it is the role of the police department to enforce traffic rules, great care was taken to contravene any perception of draconian authority.

For example, the Road Traffic Enforcement Act was passed into law in 1947, but when this act was revised in 1960, the word enforcement was removed from the name, so that it became the Road Traffic Act. The reasoning behind this decision had to do with the fact that traffic regulations are not a part of criminal law as well as the desire to distinguish postwar law enforcement from its prewar predecessors and to create legislation that would foster trust between the law enforcement and the general public. This has become an enduring theme of postwar traffic regulation, and one characteristic of traffic safety education in this period is cooperation between the public and the private sector, with only indirect contributions from law enforcement. The following is a roughly chronological all review of the history of traffic safety policy in Japan.

4.1 Driver's License System

The basic laws affecting the driver's license system in Japan are the prewar Regulations for Motor Vehicle Enforcement of 1919 and the postwar Road Traffic Enforcement Act and Regulations for Road Traffic Enforcement, both of 1947. In addition, driver's licenses were originally handled at the prefectural level. A distinction is made between licenses for automobiles and those for motorcycles, with the exception of small-displacement motorcycles that may also be operated by holders of other licenses. Since 1965, all two-wheeled vehicles with displacements of 50 cc or higher may be operated by holders of a motorcycle license. Figure 6 above shows the number of individuals holding a driver's license in Japan from 1969 to 2010.

A characteristic of Japan's driver license system is that 95% of all holders of driver's licenses receive driver education at an authorized driving school. Although similar driving schools exist in Europe and North America, there is no obligation to undergo class work and training at an authorized institution, as there is in Japan. Although driving schools existed during the prewar era, there were no unified

standards. Just as with driver's licenses, the Road Traffic Enforcement Act and Regulations for Road Traffic Enforcement of 1947 are the basic laws affecting driving schools, and the Road Traffic Act of 1960 provided for the current system of authorized driving schools. The schools must be authorized by the National Public Safety Commission, and the requirements for receiving authorization include certified instructors; the construction of a course with a specific area, geometry, and structure; and the use of educational programs and facilities that conform to criteria given in the Road Traffic Act. Students are required to pass a driving proficiency test prior to graduation, and a unique characteristic of this system is that those who do graduate are exempted from having to retake the proficiency test when they apply for a driver's license.

Another characteristic is that holders may renew their license at a minimal cost and after only a brief refresher course even without any actual experience behind the wheel. In fact, since even people who do not actually drive are able to renew their driver's license just as long as they are not guilty of any violation or accident, a driver's license is automatically "good for life," and as a result is often renewed merely for its convenience as a means of identification. Many have pointed out, of course, the disadvantages of a system that permits so-called "paper drivers" to continue to renew their license indefinitely in spite of the fact that their proficiency is never retested and thus the level of their driving skills or their ability to drive safely remains unknown.

4.2 No Honking, Please—Public and Private Sector Cooperation in Traffic Safety Education⁴

The present day issue of noise pollution due to overuse of car horns that is prevalent throughout Asia was an issue in postwar Japan, as well. The following case study of the No Honking, Please movement in Japan is presented as an example of how law enforcement can contribute to public awareness of traffic safety.

The No Honking, Please movement was part of grassroots efforts to reduce traffic noise in the 1950s that were also known under names like Stop Traffic Noise or Refrain from Honking. Noise came from things like trolleys, construction sites, and advertising attractions, but the single largest source was the horns of motor vehicles. Noise levels in 1953 were 70 to 75 phons.

The use of horns as necessary to ensure safety when passing or when driving slowly had been recognized legally. Article 13 of the Road Traffic Enforcement Act that came into effect in 1948 stated that "actions necessary when following or passing vehicles or horses are hereby stipulated." In addition, Article 24, Paragraph 2 of the same Act further stipulated that "when overtaking another vehicle, the following vehicle must whistle, shout, or otherwise signal its presence to the leading vehicle as a warning to ensure traffic safety when passing." Moreover, Article 20 of the Road Traffic Enforcement Act stated that "actions necessary when a vehicle or horse, or railway vehicle must move

⁴ This section is based on Kato's contribution to International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences, Research Project Report H2296 (2011).

slowly are hereby stipulated,” and Article 29 of that same law states that “a vehicle or horse, or railway vehicle must whistle, shout, or otherwise signal its presence when passing intersections where visibility is poor or the top of slopes, curves, crosswalks or crowded areas.”

Thus, the sounding of a horn was a legal obligation in instances such as these. As reported by Tominaga (1993), when movements to mitigate noise began, traffic officers requested clarification as to whether or not they should enforce laws requiring the sounding of horns, and were told that once movements to mitigate noise began, there would be no need for enforcement.

In Tokyo, an anti-noise ordinance was enacted in November, 1953, and the Refrain from Honking movement began on January 1, 1954. The effect, however, was less than hoped for, because the affected areas included only the area bounded by Hibiya, Otemachi, Nihonbashi, Edobashi, Shinbashi-ichome, Toranomom, and Keishicho [the Metropolitan Police Department].

The first area to achieve results was Osaka. In the postwar period, rampant use of loudspeakers on city streets led to numerous complaints to Osaka City Hall. After consultations involving the Osaka Prefectural Police Department, other related organizations, and citizen’s groups, a Quiet City movement began on March 1, 1958. The original objective was to reduce noise from car horns and improve the manners of pedestrians. An early slogan was Go Slow and Pay Attention without Honking, and a Thank You, Drivers campaign as well as an essay and a poster contest were held to publicize the event to elementary-school students and small children. With the success of these activities in Osaka, similar programs were seen throughout Japan.

The No Honking, Please movement emphasized the importance of quality of life over the letter of the law, and showed that cooperation between the public and private sectors as well as grassroots movements could achieve change without the participation of law enforcement, and a review of this era is certain to provide plenty of useful ideas to other countries where there is concern over noise from car horns.

4.3 Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities

4.3.1 Improvements and financing

Article 2, Paragraph 3 of the 1966 Act for Promotion of Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities specifies two types of improvements for special consideration. The first is projects for the installation either of (1) traffic signals, roadway signage, and roadway markers or for (2) traffic control centers, both of which are undertaken by Prefectural Public Safety Commissions.

The second is projects for the installation either of (1) overhead or underground pedestrian crossings as well as other emergency measures necessary for ensuring traffic safety within sidewalks, bicycle paths, and other segments of roadways or other enhancements of roadways as specified by government ordinance and (2) roadway signage (route number markers and maps for pedestrians), guardrails, street lamps or other appurtenant devices specified by government ordinance as necessary to ensure traffic

safety, and lane markers, both of which are undertaken by the roadway administrator. The funding for these improvements was also divided into two major classifications, which are explained below.

4.3.2 Road improvement special accounting and improvements to traffic safety facilities

(1) Road improvement special accounting and road finances

Article 13 of the Public Finance Act specifies that accounting procedures for the Japanese government be divided into general accounting and special accounting, but both the Japanese constitution and the Public Finance Act treat special accounting procedures in the same manner as general accounting procedures. Moreover, there are transfers from general accounting to special accounting that prevent these two from being completely independent. The difference between special accounting and general accounting lies in provisions for itemized reporting of annual revenues and expenditures. Based on this, a budget specifically for roadway construction must allocate specific annual revenues to specific annual expenditures—in other words, road improvement projects—which are reported under road improvement special accounting procedures (and later as a road improvement account under social capital improvement project special accounting procedures).

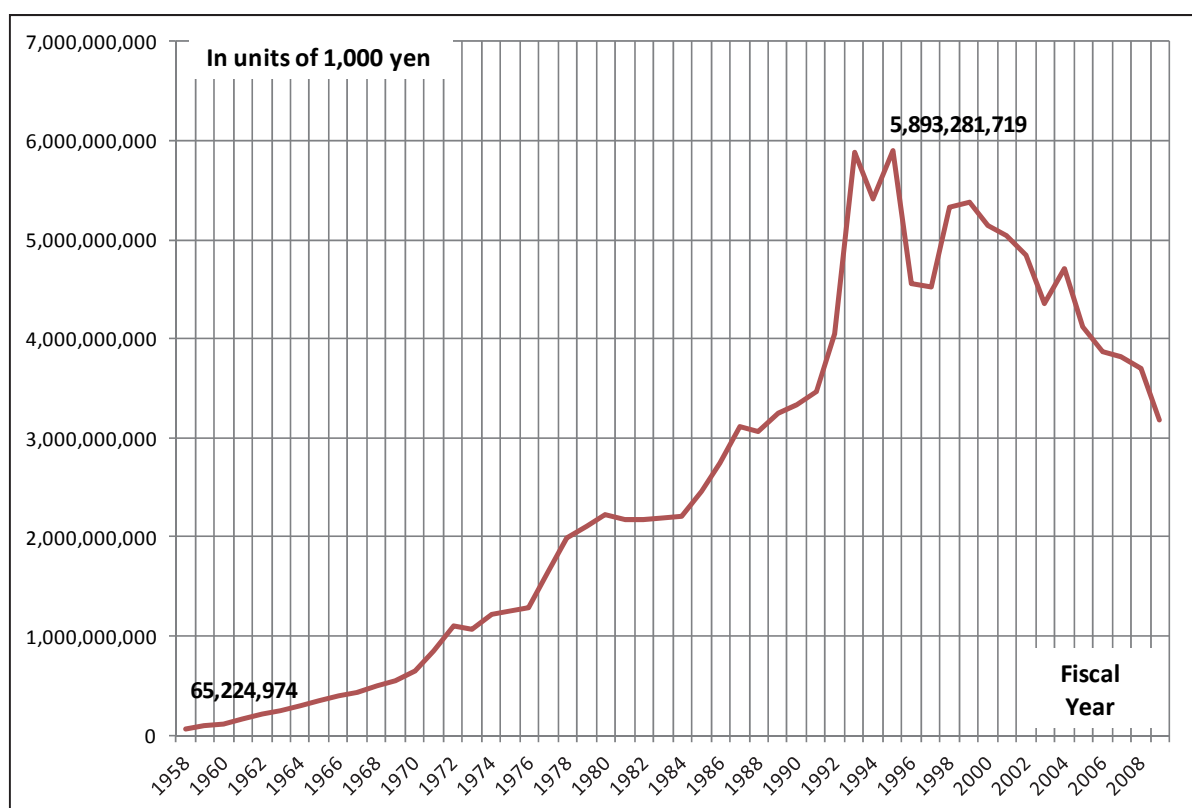


Figure 13 Road improvement special accounting annual expenditures from FY1958 to FY2009

Source: Table No. 8—Special accounting annual revenue and expenditure since FY1890, published by the Ministry of Finance in 2011 Note: Using data for road improvement accounts under social capital improvement project special accounting from FY2008 settlements

Figure 13 shows road improvement special accounting annual expenditures from FY1958 to FY2009. This figure shows that what was originally a 65 billion yen budget eventually grew in scale to a record

5.89 trillion yen in FY1995. Naturally, these figures would need to be adjusted for inflation in a serious comparative study, but even the raw data shows us the extent that road improvements in Japan grew in a short period of time.

Table 4 Road finances and administrative authority

		National (Road special accounting)	Prefectural	Municipal
National taxes	Gasoline tax	100%		
	LPG tax	50%	50%	
	Motor vehicle tax	Approx. 53%		Approx. 13%
Local taxes	Diesel oil delivery tax		100%	
	Motor vehicle acquisition tax		Approx. 30%	Approx. 70%
	Local road tax		58%	42%
	Local motor vehicle tax			100%
	Local LPG tax		100%	

Source: Excerpted from budget deletions given on page 36 of Goto (2009)

Note: All LPG tax (prefectural rate of 50%) goes to local LPG taxes, and all motor vehicle tax (municipal rate of 13%) goes to local motor vehicle taxes. Two-thirds of all revenues from motor vehicle taxes go to national taxes, 77.5% of which are used for road finance.

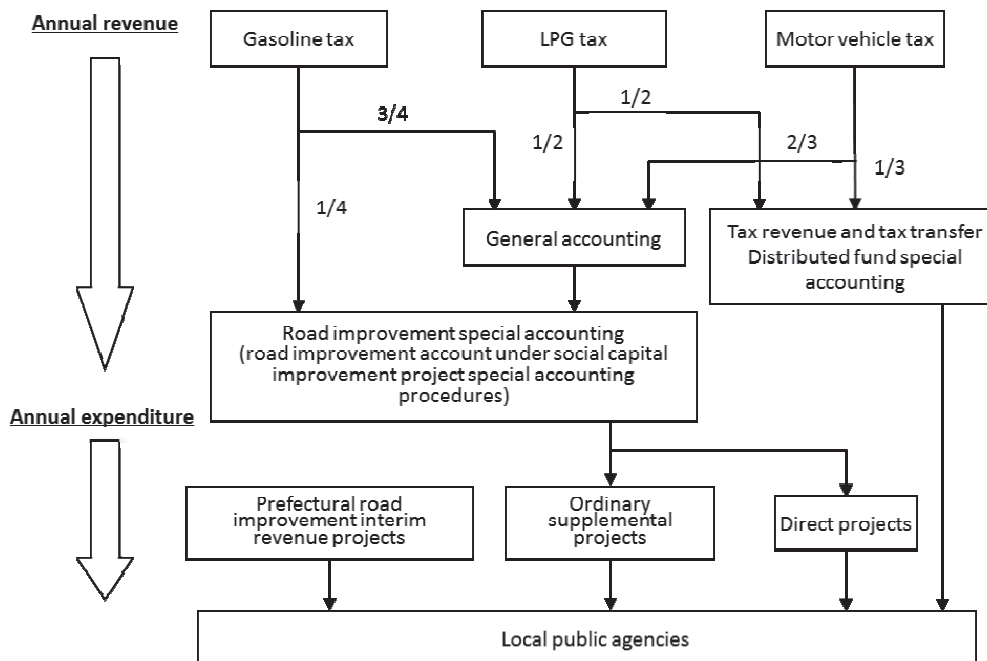


Figure 14 Flowchart for road improvement special accounting annual revenue and expenditure until FY2008

Source: Excerpted from page 36 of Goto (2009)

Note: The fractions in the chart indicate portions of tax revenue distributed. Also, road improvement special accounting includes funds from other industrial investment special accounting and NTT finances.

Road users pay a variety of taxes related to that use, as shown in Table 4. This system is based on the concept that those who extract benefit from roadway improvement should also bear the cost, and is modeled on the Highway Trust Fund in the United States. Funds earmarked for roadway construction include national taxes such as gasoline taxes, LPG taxes, and motor vehicle taxes, which are subject to road improvement special accounting procedures. As shown in Figure 14, funds from road improvement special accounting are distributed to local public agencies through prefectural road improvement interim revenue projects, ordinary supplemental projects, and other projects. The framework for financing of road improvement in Japan has not changed significantly since 1958, but the system shown above was discontinued in March of 2009 and road finances were reclassified to fall under the general budget the following April.

One advantage of specifically allocated budgets is the underlying logic of expecting those who extract benefit to bear the cost—a relationship that is not always clear when financing comes from the general budget. Another benefit lies in the fact that road improvement is an investment with a long period of gestation, and a specifically allocated budget helps ensure stable financing. Disadvantages include a lack of flexibility and the potential for wastefulness or surpluses when revenues are high. Yet many feel the same disadvantages still exist even under a general budget, and cite difficulties in comparing systems on a qualitative basis.

(2) Financing for traffic safety facilities

The law that provides the basis for expenditure of road financing on traffic safety facilities is the Emergency Measures for Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities Act, which passed into law in 1966. After a number of revisions, this law was revised and renamed Promotion of Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities Act in March, 2003. Later, the Traffic Safety Facilities Improvement Five-Year Plan was integrated together with other long-term social capital improvement plans into the Social Capital Improvement Priority Plan.

Under this same law, based on the incidence of traffic accidents and other criteria such as traffic volume, the Japanese government designated “roads recognized as being particularly important to ensuring traffic safety” as eligible for “complete or partial funding, or provision of supplemental funding, from the national government for improvements to traffic safety facilities.” These were called “special traffic safety facility improvement projects.” In addition, the Prefectural Public Safety Commissions and roadway administrators who were to be responsible for implementing these projects were required to create traffic safety facility improvement plans based on a national Traffic Safety Facilities Improvement Three-Year Plan (which was later revised into a Traffic Safety Facilities Improvement Five-Year Plan and integrated into the Social Capital Improvement Priority Plan Act).

Under this law, the Japanese government would bear one-half the cost of special traffic safety facility improvement projects undertaken by the roadway administrator of national highways, prefectural roadways, and municipal roads as well as provide supplemental funding amounting to 55% of the cost

of traffic safety projects undertaken on municipal roads designated as school routes by government ordinance.

(3) Traffic safety policy special funding accounts

A system for traffic fines was instituted as part of the 1968 revision of the Road Traffic Act, and served as the basis for the collection of fines.⁵ Accounting procedures for these monies specified that they should be used to defray the cost of improvements to road traffic safety facilities. Specifically, these monies were to defray the cost of the installation and maintenance for road traffic safety facility projects undertaken independently by local public agencies that were designated by government ordinance, and were used for traffic signals, roadway signage, pedestrian crossings, and other facilities, under the terms of special accounting, as described above.

Since FY1983, financing that had previously been handled with general accounting procedures has been performed as special accounting procedures for distribution of tax revenues. Special accounting procedures for distribution of tax revenues is a special accounting procedure that was instituted together with the establishment of a system for distribution of local tax revenues in 1954, and is handled by the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and the Ministry of Finance.

⁵ After the Road Traffic Act passed into law, the number of traffic violation tickets issued continued to increase, and in order to provide prompt processing, a common format for traffic violation tickets was used after January, 1963. The number of tickets issued, however, continued to increase, and to further expedite prompt processing, payment of a fine to a local government agency in lieu of criminal prosecution was instituted for violations that did not involve criminal negligence. Thus, a system for traffic fines was introduced. Drivers stopped for traffic violations were now given traffic violation tickets rather than a summons to appear. Summons to appear were thereafter used only for [more serious] infractions that were not subject to fines. Traffic violation tickets included traffic violation notifications, license storage receipt, traffic accident form, traffic violation notification, enforcement form, notification form, traffic law violation ledger, and other documentation.

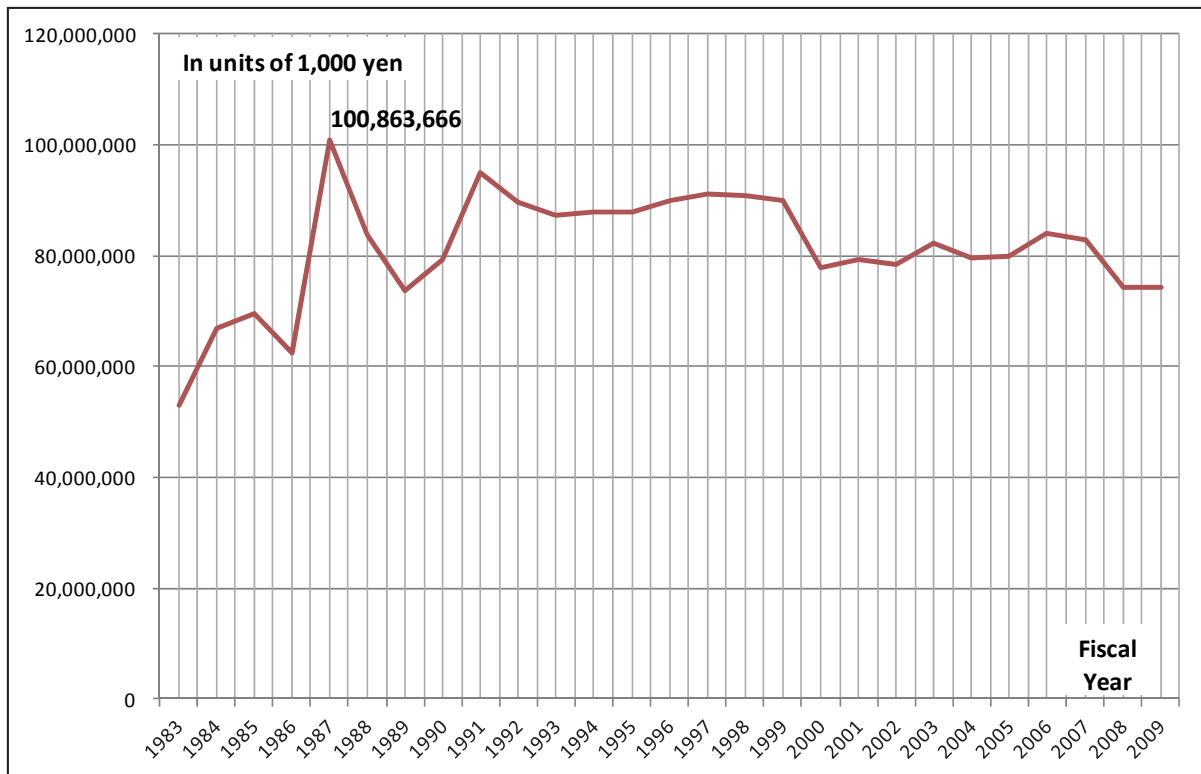


Figure 15 Expenditures from traffic safety policy special funding accounts per special accounting procedures for distribution of tax revenue from FY1983 to FY2009

Source: Table No. 8—Special accounting annual income and expenditure since FY1890, published by the Ministry of Finance in 2011

Figure 15 shows expenditures from traffic safety policy special funding accounts per special accounting procedures for distribution of tax revenue from FY1983 to FY2009. As can be seen, expenditures from traffic safety policy special funding accounts peaked in FY1987 at just over 100 billion yen, but expenditures continue at a rate of approximately 80 billion yen annually. Also, annual revenue for FY2009 was 79,876,220,000 yen, the majority of which (73,864,300,000 yen, in fact), came from fines paid against traffic violation tickets. A comparison of these figures reveals a shortfall of approximately 5,191,830,000 yen, which was attributed to “less revenue than anticipated from payment of fines” in the Ministry of Finance’s Settlement of Special Accounts for FY2009.

A review of traffic safety policies will show the benefits of allocating monies from payment of fines to specific uses and of having a budget specifically for roadway construction. In Japan, the conversion of specific budgets to general finance has brought about a reduction in public works projects. In the United States, as well, even at the state level, allocation of fuel taxes to general finance usually leads to reduced expenditure on roads. History shows us the necessity for having those who extract benefit bear the cost and for handling improvements to roadways and safety facilities as a single entity.

4.3.3 Traffic safety facility improvement plans and social capital improvement plans⁶

Since 1955, motor vehicle traffic volumes in Japan have continued to increase rapidly, as has the incidence of traffic accidents. In response to this, the government established a Traffic Accident Prevention Policy Institute in 1955. This organization was dissolved and reorganized under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office as the Traffic Policy Institute in 1960. Another measure for implementing traffic accident policy was the establishment of a Special Traffic Ministers Conference in 1961, which was dissolved and reorganized as the Traffic Ministers Council in 1965.

Despite these measures, traffic accidents continued to rise, and in order to implement further policies against traffic accidents, the aforementioned Emergency Measures for Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities Act was passed into law and served as the basis for establishment of the First Three-Year Plan and implementation of traffic safety facility improvement projects in 1966.

Prior to this, improvements to roadway signage and other traffic safety facilities were considered the responsibility of prefectural Public Safety Commissions, which were authorized to enact traffic regulations, and because of this, the cost of such improvement projects was borne by the prefectures, with few subsidies from the Japanese government. With the dramatic rise in traffic casualties that accompanied increased motorization, however, the need for all traffic safety facilities throughout Japan to conform to a given standard was recognized. Thus, in 1965, with the publication of Emergency Measures to Effect Thorough Traffic Accident Prevention, the Traffic Policy Institute called for prioritizing the upgrading and expansion of traffic safety facilities, thereby paving the way for the Emergency Measures for Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities Act.

The purpose of this Act was “to provide for improvements to traffic conditions, thereby preventing traffic accidents and promoting the smooth flow of traffic, through implementation of traffic safety facility improvement projects based on comprehensive planning for roadways that are sites of frequent accidents or that are considered to be necessary to ensuring traffic safety in emergencies,” and it contained specific provisions for planning, roadway designation, and financing.

With these measures began a system under which the government systematically supplemented prefectural efforts to raise traffic safety facilities to a specific level. The Emergency Measures for Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities Act continued to serve as a basis for government subsidy of traffic safety facility improvement projects until 2002. Under the provisions of this Act, projects which were subsidized partially or in whole were referred to as “Designated traffic safety facility improvement projects” and all other projects were referred to as “local independent traffic safety facility improvement projects,” and authorization of subsidies was reviewed each time a new plan was implemented.

As shown in Table 5, improvement plans based on the Act were three-year plans until 1971, and with the passing into law of the Traffic Safety Policies Basic Act, all new plans after 1970 were expanded

⁶ Much of this chapter is based on material from Sumitomo (2008) and pages 551–562 of the Japan Highway Users Conference (2009).

to five-year plans. In 1996, the need for structural reform of public finance led to a further expansion of two years, resulting in the sixth plan becoming a seven-year plan but without any change in volume (budget) of projects.

Table 5 Traffic safety facility improvement project plans

Description		Designated projects			Local independent projects		
		Plan (10 ⁹ yen)	Actual (10 ⁹ yen)	Achieved (%)	Plan (10 ⁹ yen)	Actual (10 ⁹ yen)	Achieved (%)
First Three-Year Plan (1966 to 1968)	Roadway administrator	72.19	72.21	100.0	13.40	25.32	–
	Public Safety Commission	6.03	6.03	100.0	3.80	11.20	–
Second Three-Year Plan (1969 to 1971)	Roadway administrator	75.00	50.74	67.7	62.30	45.62	73.2
	Public Safety Commission	4.63	2.85	61.6	23.07	15.11	65.5
First Five-Year Plan (1971 to 1975)	Roadway administrator	229.28	238.09	103.8	230.41	232.4	100.9
	Public Safety Commission	68.55	72.09	105.2	105.27	100.01	95.0
Second Five-Year Plan (1976 to 1980)	Roadway administrator	570.00	592.21	103.9	411.53	452.55	110.0
	Public Safety Commission	150.00	142.41	94.9	230.00	163.64	71.1
Third Five-Year Plan (1981 to 1985)	Roadway administrator	910.00	815.38	89.6	687.69	614.40	89.3
	Public Safety Commission	190.00	131.20	69.0	304.96	236.54	77.6
Fourth Five-Year Plan (1986 to 1990)	Roadway administrator	1,350.0	1,159.60	100.8	1,023.50	773.91	75.6
	Public Safety Commission	135.00	116.50	101.3	368.01	350.91	95.4
Fifth Five-Year Plan (1991 to 1995)	Roadway administrator	1,850.00	1,763.50	110.9	1,440.00	1,309.10	90.9
	Public Safety Commission	165.00	167.80	108.3	497.00	514.90	103.6
Seven-Year Plan (1996 to 2002)	Roadway administrator	2,130.00	2,560.60	120.2	1,950.00	1,584.40	81.3
	Public Safety Commission	190.00	279.70	147.2	630.00	614.40	97.5

Source: Page 552 of the Japan Highway Users Conference (2009)

Note 1: Local independent projects in the First Three-Year Plan include school routes for the FY1967 and FY1968 only.

Note 2: Due to interim restructuring, achieved figures for the Second Three-Year Plan include the FY1969 and FY1970 only.

Note 3: Designated projects in the Fourth, Fifth, and Seven-Year Plans reflect total values that include adjustment costs.

In contrast, based on the Social Capital Improvement Priority Plan Act (2003 Law No. 20), traffic safety facility improvement projects were incorporated together with projects from eight other fields (roadways, airports, ports, urban parks, sewage systems, flood control, steep slopes, and shorelines) into a five-year social capital improvement priority plan for the period from FY2003. Table 6 shows major changes that came about with the passing into law of the Social Capital Improvement Priority Plan Act, as compared to roadway improvement five-year plans. These include (1) changeover from the conventional project volume base to one of outcome evaluation and (2) integration of plans from a variety of fields into a single, interdisciplinary plan.

Table 7 describes specific traffic safety facility improvement projects implemented as part of the Second Social Capital Improvement Plan for the period from FY2008 to FY2012. Of these, the “safe

walking area” was intended for implementation in areas with a relatively high percentage of traffic fatalities among pedestrians and bicycle riders as a [multi-]faceted approach to preventing accidents, which was considered necessary for the 796 locations nationwide designated by the National Police Agency or the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism in areas where policies are implemented primarily by municipalities. Also, the term “sites of multiple accidents” refers to one of the 3,956 locations nationwide designated by the National Police Agency or the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism for priority implementation of countermeasures due to a high incidence of accidents.

Table 6 Comparison of conventional roadway improvement five-year plans with social capital improvement priority plans (typical items)

	Conventional roadway improvement five-year plans	Social capital improvement priority plan
Targets	Roadway extension, area, improvement rate, or other project volume basis	Evaluation of resultant impact based on multiple new indices (increased use of ETC, etc.)
Cost reduction targets	No particular targets	15% reduction compared with FY2002
Tie-ins with other plans	Independent roadway improvements (few tie-ins)	Integration of plans from nine different fields

Source: Excerpt from page 34 of Goto (2009)

Table 7 Specific traffic safety facility improvement projects implemented as part of the Second Social Capital Improvement Plan for the period

Policy	Measures	Indices
To create a safe and secure road traffic environment suitable for a low birthrate, graying population.	Improvement of traffic safety	Rate of casualties in traffic accidents <i>Approx. 1.09 accidents per million vehicle kilometer in 2007 reduced 10% to 1.0 accidents per million vehicle kilometer by 2012.</i>
	Promotion of policies for pedestrians and bicycle riders as well as policies for community roads	Reduce casualty rates for pedestrians and bicycle riders in safe walking areas <i>20% reduction by 2012 of casualty rates for pedestrians and bicycle riders in areas where policies are implemented</i> Universal access at traffic signals along major community thoroughfares <i>Increase from 83% in 2007 to 100% by 2012</i> Universal access along designated roadways <i>Increase from 51% in FY2007 to 75% by FY2012</i>
	Promotion of policies for truck roads and arteries	Reduce casualty rates at sites of multiple accidents <i>30% reduction by 2012 of casualty rates at sites of multiple accidents</i> Reduce casualty rates at locations with advanced traffic signals <i>Reduce by 40,000 casualties per year by 2012</i>
Policies for maintaining smooth flow of traffic as well as countermeasures for environmental issues	Promotion of policies for smooth traffic flow	Reduce waiting times through advanced traffic signal control systems <i>Reduce waiting time by 220 million person-hours annually by 2012 in areas where policies are implemented</i> Lost time at railway crossings <i>10% reduction from 1.32 million person-hours per day in FY2007 to 1.18 million person-hours per day by FY2012</i> Reduce CO₂ emissions through advanced traffic signal control systems <i>Reduce by 460,000 tons annually by 2012</i>

Source: Excerpted from pages 33–34 of Policy Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (2011)

With the passing into law of the Social Capital Improvement Priority Plan Act, the Emergency Measures for Improvements to Traffic Safety Facilities Act was revised and renamed the Act for Promotion of Traffic Safety Facility Improvement Projects, thereby establishing a framework that enabled the designation of roadways eligible for subsidies, the drafting of implementation plans compliant with social capital improvement priority plans, the implementation of priority projects such as special subsidies requiring the coordination of both the National Police Agency and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Specifically, the following three points are worthy of mention.

- (1) Deletion of provisions related to comprehensive traffic safety facility improvement project seven-year planning as well as proposals for plans related to traffic safety facility improvement projects by municipalities
- (2) Designation of roadways considered to be particularly in need of improvements to traffic safety conditions as “designated traffic safety facility improvement project roadways” by the National Public Safety Commission and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.
- (3) Drafting of plans by Prefectural Public Safety Commissions and roadway administrators per implementation of designated traffic safety facility improvement projects that are compliant as well as by agreement concurrent with priority plans

4.4 The Japan Traffic Safety Movement and the Japan Traffic Safety Association⁷

4.4.1 Objectives and organization of the Japan traffic safety movement

Japan’s traffic safety movement began with the objective of promoting and promulgating traffic safety. Based on a general outline for implementation of a national traffic safety week by national and local law enforcement, it coordinated nationwide traffic safety programs. The original national traffic safety week began on December 10, 1948. In 1952, similar events were held in both the spring and the fall, and in 1954 began to use the name “traffic safety movement” in place of “traffic safety week.” In 1961, national traffic safety movement programs were held in the fall, but in spring of the following year, the Traffic Policy Institute, which had been established by the Cabinet Office in 1960, took the reins in the planning and implementation of the movement. Starting in 1976, the Traffic Policy Institute began holding activities in both spring and fall, a pattern which continues to this day. Festivities include parades and other promotional activities throughout Japan.

A general outline of the autumn 2010 Japan traffic safety movement is as follows.

⁷ This section is based on Kato’s contribution to International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences, Research Project Report H2296 (2011).

- (1) Objective: To promote comprehensively the prevention of traffic accidents by promulgating traffic safety principles extensively to the Japanese people, encouraging compliance with traffic rules and proper traffic etiquettes, and fostering initiatives from the Japanese people for improvements in the road traffic environment
- (2) Period: For 10 days from September 21st to 30th, 2010. September 30 has been designated a “Day of Zero Traffic Deaths” since 2008.
- (3) Sponsoring government agencies include the Prime Minister’s Office and nine other ministries, prefectural and municipal governments, and 14 private organizations. In addition, more than 150 private organizations participate as cosponsors.
- (4) Nationwide priority points include 1. Prevention of traffic accidents involving pedestrians or bicycle riders at dusk or at night (in particular, promote the use of reflective materials), 2. The proper use of seat belts or child seats by all passengers as well as the elimination of driving while under the influence of alcohol. Previously, 5 to 8 priority points were featured, but starting in 1969 were reduced to 2 or 3 at most.

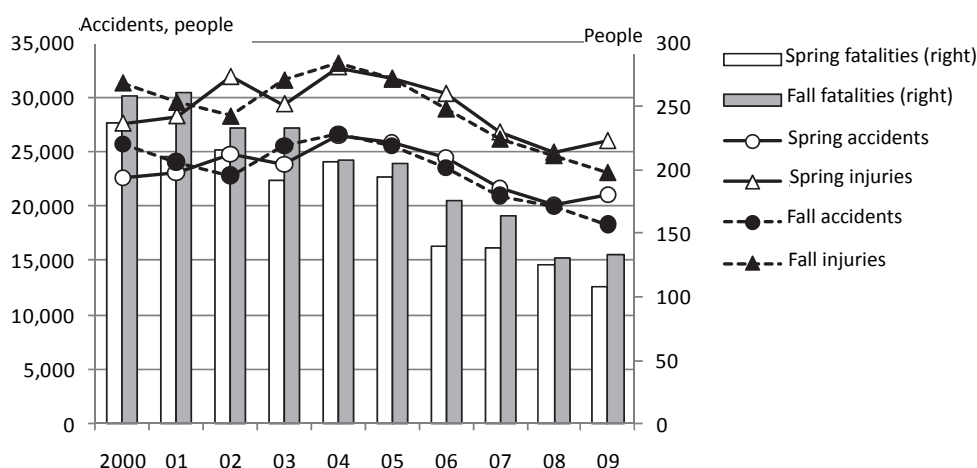


Figure 16 Traffic accidents during traffic safety movement activities for the past 10 years

Source: Traffic Safety Report

Figure 16 shows the number of traffic accidents, injuries, and fatalities that have occurred during traffic safety movement activities for the past ten years. As can be seen, all these have declined in recent years. Although there are no significant differences between the figures for spring and fall, we see that from 2001 to 2002, 2002 to 2003, and from 2008 to 2009, the trend in spring was the reverse of the trend in fall.

4.4.2 The Japan Traffic Safety Association

(1) History

The Japan Traffic Safety Association is the centralized coordinating agency for other regional, prefectural, and local traffic safety associations throughout Japan. It is one of the organizations that helps organize traffic safety movement activities nationwide and was established for the purpose of

promoting safety policies for the promulgation of traffic safety awareness and the prevention of traffic accidents.

As ownership of motor vehicles increased in Japan, so did awareness of traffic accidents, leading to the establishment of traffic safety associations throughout the country. With economic growth came the widening use of motor vehicles for transportation, and in recognition of a need to unify nationwide policies for preventing traffic accidents, the Japan Traffic Safety Association was established in 1950. Membership originally comprised prefectural traffic safety associations, traffic safety associations in major urban areas, the National Public Safety Commission, and law enforcement officials. Reorganization of law enforcement on a prefectural level in 1955 also led local traffic safety associations to a similar reorganization and to membership in the Japan Traffic Safety Association. As traffic accidents continued their rapid increase, however, the Road Traffic Act was passed into law, and in 1961 the Japan Traffic Safety Association was incorporated as a foundation.

Within the articles of incorporation of the foundation, as a means to achieve the objectives of preventing traffic accidents and furthering compliance with traffic safety laws, it was stated that, in addition to improvements to traffic conditions and the implementation of suitable measures by the government, heightened awareness of the need for traffic safety in each and every individual is paramount. The Japan Traffic Safety Association was established to serve as a central institution for the organization of public sentiment into a grassroots movement capable of answering the need for public action through understanding and cooperation at every level of society.

(2) Programs

The Association has undertaken a wide variety of programs since its establishment, including its role as co-organizer of national traffic safety movement activities, and continues to operate major programs, some of which are given below.

- 1) Organization of the Traffic Safety National Movement Central Conference: held annually in January since 1961, this conference includes presentations by special-interest groups (regional and family working group, traffic safety education working group, and corporate working group) as well as a general assembly.
- 2) Traffic Honor and Green Cross Awards (gold and silver awards)
- 3) Contests for annual traffic safety slogans and family traffic safety essays
- 4) Publication of "People and Vehicles," and educational traffic safety magazine

These traffic safety programs were even influenced in some small way by student protests of the 1960s. Hora (1978) points out that, despite a lack of conclusive documentation, the importance of community relations in establishing close connections with individual citizens became evident in the association's activities at that time.

I'd also like to provide a brief explanation regarding the annual traffic safety slogan.

The first national contest for a safety slogan was held with the cooperation of the National Police

Agency, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Mainichi Newspaper in 1965, and the winning slogans were used in national traffic safety movement activities the following spring. The winning slogans received an award from the prime minister, and that year's choices were "Brake early, and go slow" (for drivers), "Look again and raise your hand before you cross the street" (for pedestrians), and "The world prays for traffic safety" (general audiences).

Since that time, these contests of been held annually and the Association's Website claims that it has received more than 10,000,000 entries all told. Particularity notable were 1967's "Stay out of the street! Cars can't stop that quickly" (for children) and 1973's "Japan isn't that big. Where are you going is such a hurry?" (for drivers), which became buzzwords in their day. Starting in 1971, a poster contest featuring the annual slogan was begun, and has garnered 300,000 entries in total.

Each of these slogans are a reflection of the times in which they were created, and popular topics include speed, driving under the influence of alcohol, keeping proper distance with the lead car, seatbelts, helmets, and other major themes of traffic safety. Themes for FY2010 included the use of cell phones by drivers, the wearing of reflective materials by pedestrians and bicycle riders, and the proper use of lights, brakes, and helmets by children on bicycles.

While it is true that national traffic safety movement activities are government operated, their effectiveness can be seen by the decline in traffic accidents during the programs. Given that traffic conditions and the causes of traffic accidents vary from region to region, it is worth noting that prefectural law enforcement and local traffic safety associations work hard to develop programs that are best suited for their localities.

5. Conclusion

At the end of the Second World War, Japan entered a phase of rapid economic growth and equally rapid motorization. Despite this, there was a notable lack of capital investment in not just good roads but traffic signals, roadway signage, and other traffic safety facilities. Since the passing into law of the Traffic Safety Policies Basic Act in 1970, a total of eight traffic safety basic action plans have been implemented. As a result, fatalities due to traffic accidents in 2001 reached the 4,611 mark after declining steadily for a 11 years in a row. This is roughly one quarter of the 16,765 deaths recorded in 1975, which was Japan's worst year ever for traffic fatalities. In the roughly 40 intervening years, we have been blessed by the efforts of organizations concerned with traffic safety to reduce traffic fatalities. And although injuries due to traffic accidents have been on the decline for the past several years, both the number of injuries and the number of accidents continued to rise into first decade of the 21st century. Clearly, our efforts must now turn towards reducing traffic accidents overall.

Trends toward a low-growth, graying population in Japan continue to gather momentum. As these trends advance, holders of driver's licenses, automobile ownership, and the population itself will a

either remain stable or begin to decline, but recent data clearly shows that these things in and of themselves will not necessarily lead to a decline in traffic accidents. This suggests an obvious urgency to emphasize traffic safety to the elderly. The elderly are more likely not just to be victims of traffic accidents but to be perpetrators, as well, and looking at recent trends in traffic accidents, we see that traffic fatalities of the elderly remain high and traffic accidents caused by elderly drivers are on the increase.

In this way, as social conditions change over time, so do public expectations concerning traffic safety policy. Researchers must demonstrate the effectiveness of these policies. Those responsible for policy must then apply the research results to improving policies to make them more effective. In other words, a prompt response to changing times by government and related agencies with farsighted and effective policies will lead to a reduction in future traffic accidents.

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Born in Kyoto in 1964, Kato withdrew from the Doshisha University Graduate School Division of Economics doctoral program in 1992 having completed all course requirements. Received his PhD in economics from Doshisha University. Before assuming his current position, he worked as an associate professor at Kansai Gaidai University. Other current positions include guest professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, board member of the Aviation Policy Research Association, and board member of the Japan Economic Education Center Foundation. Research interests include transportation economics and the US economy. He is the recipient of the 2005 Japan Society of Transportation Economics Award (Best Paper Award, Co-author).