Disaster Public Housing in Japan

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Securing Post-Disaster Housing

- In Japan, the securing of post-disaster housing is generally divided into three phases.

Today's Theme

Disaster Occurrence

Emergency Relief Phase

Several days to several months

Photo: Cabinet Office

Evacuation Shelters

(e.g., school gymnasiums, etc.)

Recovery Phase

Approximately up to 2

Photo: Nanao City, Ishikawa Pref. (April 2024)

Temporary Emergency Housing

(Simple prefabricated buildings)

Reconstruction Phase

Approximately 2 years and beyond

Photo: Mashiki Town, Kumamoto Pref. (2016 Kumamoto Earthquake)

Disaster Public Housing

(Permanent housing)

- In preparing temporary emergency housing, it is essential to ensure rapid supply. Therefore, it is typically used on a limited basis for around two years, and certain construction standards are temporarily exempted.

- In preparing disaster public housing, it is necessary to estimate the number of units needed, link with urban planning, address resident needs, and provide welfare services. Mid- to long-term perspectives and social situation must be taken into account. In Japan the population decline and aging demographics is considered.

Premises

- Japan is experiencing a declining birthrate and aging population, with an increase in vacant buildings.
- In Japan, there are no public housing constructed by directly by the central government and it is the role of prefectures and municipality government to construct and manage public housing considering local characteristics and challenges.

Supplying Disaster Public Housing

○To reduce the burden borne by local governments when supplying a public housing to be rented to those who lost their houses due to extraordinary natural disasters including earthquake, heavy storm, flood and high tide.

○To put it into practice to raise the subsidy ratio, etc. in two stages for such expenses to supply a public housing and to reduce the house rent depending on the extent of the natural disaster (“General Disaster” or “Disaster of Extreme Severity”).

<Main subsidy ratio for subsidies on disaster public housing>

		General public housing	Disaster public housing	
			General disaster (Damage: minor)	Disaster of extreme severity (Damage: severe)
Subsidy ratio	Supply (construction or acquisition)	National government: principally 1/2 Local government: principally 1/2	National government: 2/3 Local government: 1/3	National government: 3/4 Local government: 1/4
	Reducing house rent	10 years *1: principally 1/2	10 years *1: 2/3	Initial 5 years: 3/4 6th – 10th years *1: 2/3

*1 : The period for subsidy shall be extended to 20 years in case of acquiring a land to supply disaster public housing.

Subsidy ratio: Normal → Larger

<Image of supplied disaster public housing>

East Japan Typhoon in 2019

*Typhoon No. 19 in 2019

Location: Marumori-machi, Miyagi pref.
Constructed: 2023
Structure: RC construction

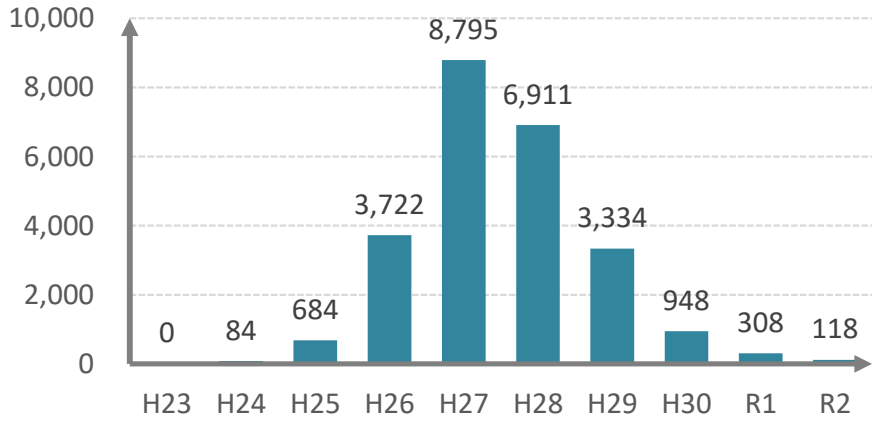
Kumamoto Earthquake

Location: Nishihara-mura, Kumamoto pref.
Constructed: 2018
Structure: Wooden construction

Issues in construction of disaster public housing

In the case of large-scale disasters, securing land for the construction of disaster public housing takes time, and it may take a long period before housing is supplied.
In Japan, where the population is declining, the number of public housing units tends to increase significantly after a disaster. However, due to population decline, there is a high possibility that these houses may remain vacant in the future

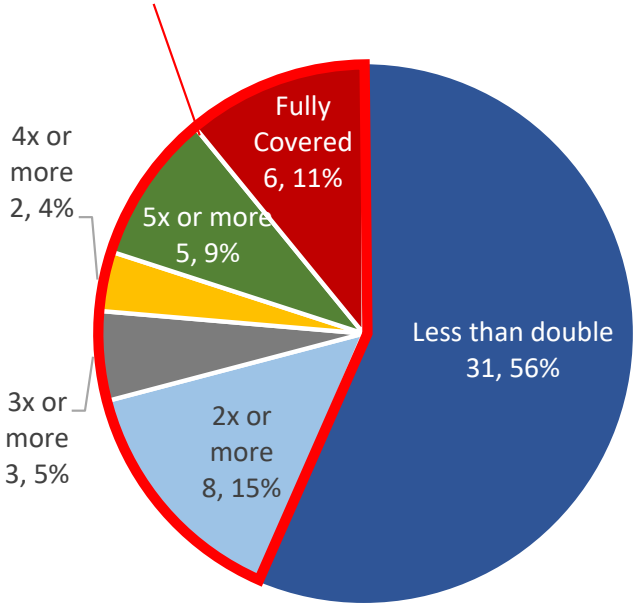
＜ Example: Timeline for starting the management of disaster public housing after the Great East Japan Earthquake ＞



Event Name	Completion Date (Planned)	Duration Until Completion
Great East Japan Earthquake *(excluding nuclear evacuees)*	March 2021	10 years
Kumamoto Earthquake	March 2020	3 years 11 months
July 2018 Heavy Rain	August 2021	3 years 1 months
Typhoon Hagibis (October 2019)	October 2022	3 years

Change in Number of Public Housing Units Before and After the Disaster

About 44% of municipalities affected by the earthquake saw the number of public housing units more than double after the disaster.



※ Note: The chart indicates the ratio of public housing units difference in a municipality before and after the disaster

[Case Study] Utilizing Private Rental Housing (Heavy Rain Event in Western Japan, July 2018)

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- In Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture, in response to the heavy rainfall disaster in July 2018, the city provided a certain number of public disaster housing units for affected residents. At the same time, for those who were not selected to be settled in these units, private rental housing was utilized as a substitute to secure housing for the disaster victims.
- As of May 2021, 10 buildings (24 units) of private housing for disaster victims had been secured. Rental subsidies were provided for eligible properties.

Based on survey results, the city initially planned to develop 91 units of disaster public housing. However, when applications were opened, 160 households applied (far more than expected) resulting in a shortage of public housing.

Tenants were selected by drawing

Selected

[Public Disaster Housing Units] Move-in began in April 2021

Kawabe Housing Complex: 40 units

Arii Housing Complex: 20 units

Yatada-Minami Housing Complex: 31 units

Not Selected

Private rental housing (Safety Net Housing for Disaster Victims)

Move-in began in September 2020

To alleviate hesitation toward moving into private housing, support equivalent to that for public disaster housing (e.g., rent subsidies) was provided.

Private rental housing in the Mabi area was used as a substitute for public disaster housing, with rental subsidies to ensure the financial burden was equivalent to that of public housing

From September 2020, information on available properties began to be provided to households that were not selected for either disaster public housing or existing municipal public housing.

Although not able to move into newly built disaster public housing, residents could move in immediately without having to wait for completion

●Kurashiki City's Rent Subsidy Program for Private Rental Housing for Disaster Victims

Applicants	Those not selected to enter public disaster housing
Building Requirements	Located in Mabi Town, either apartment or detached house (shared housing or mixed-use with shops not allowed) At least 25 m² in floor area and earthquake resistant Equipped with kitchen, flush toilet, bath, and at least one dedicated parking space
Occupancy Period	September 1, 2020 to March 31, 202
Subsidy Details	Depending on the income level, subsidy covers between ¥0 and ¥31,000/month (up to 15 years) not to be below ¥7,500/month for the applicants payment
Other Conditions	Households earning more than ¥158,000/month are not eligible for the subsidy (excluding the first 3 years after move-in)

Key Points in the Development of Disaster Public Housing

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Prefectures and Municipalities

Planning

Capacity of the Affected Municipalities

Since the affected municipalities alone may lack sufficient manpower, officials are dispatched from municipalities across the country.
Coordination between local officials who understand the situation on the ground and dispatched officials, and leadership from the affected municipalities is essential

Land Selection

Consider connection to existing infrastructure such as urban planning, water and sewer systems, and roads, as well as future disaster risks based on hazard maps
The intention of local residents is respected to support the formation of sustainable communities
Land acquisition is carried out as necessary

Careful Survey of Affected Residents' Needs

It is important to carefully assess the needs for public disaster housing through multiple rounds of questionnaires and surveys
Efforts that encourage the use of existing housing and self-reconstruction by residents (not limited only to public housing are also valuable.
Information may be confusing in affected areas, so municipalities must provide clear and careful explanations to residents

Construction

Prompt Construction

In Japan's public works, design and construction are usually commissioned separately
However, commissioning both design and construction as a single contract and shortening the period required for bidding procedures can be effective

Role of MLIT

・Technical support based on past disaster response experience (e.g., methods for needs assessment, land selection, construction methods)
・Securing necessary budgets and providing financial support for recovery
・Coordinating between municipalities in cases where the damage is widespread
(Accurately understanding the situation on the ground and providing appropriate support)

Reference A Quick Look at Housing in Japan (English)

https://www.cbl.or.jp/slc/qr.html

The document summarizes housing and housing policies in Japan.
It also includes a summary of housing damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Photo3-2-2: Damage from Tsunami

Photo3-2-3: Damage from Earthquake

•Situation of measures taken for recovery and rebuilding (to secure stability in housing for those who lost their housing)

Various measures are being taken for the full-fledged recovery and rebuilding in the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011. This is being done urgently and, in particular, the following measures are being taken for the securing of stability of housing for those who lost their housing. All-out efforts will be made continuously from now on for recovery and rebuilding in the affected areas and for the stability of the lives of the victims.