

④ Working Conditions - Labour Relations

(1) Working Conditions

Measures to Secure and Improve Working Conditions

Overview Ensuring and Improving Working Conditions

In Japan, approximately 49.45 million people are working at some 4.09 million workplaces (source: Establishment and Enterprise Census 2006, Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications). In order to provide working environment in which people can work with a sense of security, it is crucial that working conditions laid down by the Labour Standards Law and other labour laws be observed and measures to improve working conditions be carried out.

As means to achieve this goal, every prefecture has its Labour Bureau, and there are regional Labour Standard Inspection offices across the country. In accordance with the laws related to labour standards, inspectors visit workplaces to make sure that employers abide by the statutory standards relating to working hours, safety and health and minimum wages, as well as to secure and improve working conditions.

There are two types of inspection: regular inspection and inspection based on reports filed by workers. The former includes a monthly planned inspection and a disaster inspection carried out when a serious industrial accident, fire or explosion occurs. Disaster inspection aims to investigate the cause and prevent recurrence of such accidents.

Inspection based on reports from workers is conducted when a report is filed by workers, etc.

When labour standards inspectors find that serious and gross violations of labour laws are committed, they investigate the matters as a special judicial policeman in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure to Prove criminal liability, and take judicial action to send the case to the Prosecutor's office.

Detailed Data 1 Changes in Number of Inspections

Year	No. of workplaces received on-the-spot inspection and supervision			Percentage of inspection conducted	Percentage of violations
	Regular inspection	Other inspection	Total		
	Case	Case	Case	%	%
1965	191,053	46,717	237,770	10.9	54.4
1970	233,946	54,198	288,144	10.8	70.4
1975	165,483	40,576	206,059	7.1	65.7
1980	167,850	37,060	204,910	6.4	64.2
1985	173,438	32,777	206,215	5.9	58.9
1990	156,401	22,728	179,129	4.8	57.7
1991	138,286	20,376	158,662	3.6	56.9
1992	154,109	22,298	176,407	4.1	58.6
1993	164,405	25,283	189,688	4.4	56.3
1994	162,366	26,476	188,842	4.3	56.7
1995	175,875	27,036	202,911	4.7	58.8
1996	164,611	26,281	190,892	4.4	54.0
1997	145,041	27,138	172,179	3.8	55.7
1998	153,563	32,534	186,097	4.1	54.6
1999	146,160	34,097	180,257	4.0	59.7
2000	147,773	37,091	184,864	4.1	58.8
2001	134,623	39,068	173,691	3.8	63.4
2002	131,878	41,236	173,114	3.8	62.7
2003	121,031	43,474	164,505	3.6	65.6
2004	122,793	42,835	165,628	3.6	67.1
2005	122,734	41,407	164,141	3.7	66.3
2006	118,872	42,186	161,058	3.6	67.4
2007	126,499	42,234	168,733	4.1	67.9
2008	115,993	43,097	159,090	3.9	68.5

Source: Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW

Notes: 1. "Percentage of violations" means the percentage of workplaces which committed violations in the total workplaces receiving regular inspections.

2. Years indicate calendar years, except 1965 which is a fiscal year.

3. "No. of applicable workplaces" and "no. of workers" after 1980 are based on the Establishment and Enterprise Census (Statistics Bureau, MIC).

For the years when survey was not conducted, the figures of the previous year were adopted.