

Overview of the Consumer Affairs Agency



Consumer Affairs Agency
Government of Japan

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Mission of the Consumer Affairs Agency

As the organization that steers and leads the nation's consumer administration, the Consumer Affairs Agency strives to realize a society where every consumer as a leading player can live a safe, worry-free and affluent life.

The latter half of 2000s saw a large number of serious consumer issues come about in Japan, epitomizing the era that can aptly be called a historical milestone triggering a rethinking of the roles of the national government. In those days, various problems that posed a threat to the people's safe and secure lives and caused damage to consumers properties came to light one after another as can be seen in significant social problems such as Chinese-made frozen dumpling problems, illegal distribution of contaminated rice, carbon monoxide poisoning accidents caused by gas-fired water heaters and elevator accidents, a flurry of food mislabeling cases and rampant occurrences of scams targeting elderly people.

What is behind the occurrence of such social issues is the fact that since the Meiji period (1868-1912) the national government had been working to achieve a growth in the nation's economy by protecting and fostering businesses in the ministries and agencies, which led to section-by-section approaches toward consumer protection, deeming it as a less important challenge merely derived from missions for industrial promotion.

However, those systems were reviewed and as a result of market-focused measures that have been taken in recent years, including deregulations, there have been a growing demand for a "safe and worry-free market" and "market of good quality." Under such circumstances, the national government has been required to strive to satisfy such a demand and bring about a "paradigm shift" in the government by reviewing the policy measures that have been taken so far and the roles of the administrative organs so that it can realize society where every consumer as a leading player can live a safe, worry-free and affluent life.

Thus, an idea of creating a brand new organization equipped with powerful authority and staffed with sufficient personnel was deliberated with the aim of eliminating the section-by-section approaches in the past and integrating the existing organizations engaged in the consumer administration. Relevant laws for a new organization dedicated to the nation's consumer administration were enacted and promulgated in June 2009, after the nation-wide discussion among government officials including then-Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, Diet members, consumers (organization), business operators (organization), intellectuals, and bar associations; the Consumer Affairs Agency was officially established on September 1, 2009.

The Consumer Affairs agency marks its 10th anniversary in September 2019. Always adhering to the philosophy that dates back to the founding day, the Consumer Affairs Agency works hard to fulfill the mission to further meet the expectations of the people as the organization steering and leading the nation's consumer administration in the government while focusing on various social economic changes and challenges.

About the Consumer Affairs Agency

Overview of the Consumer Affairs Agency

Addressing advanced consumer policy

- Developing a basic plan for consumer policy to promote consumer policy of the entire government in a planned and integrated manner scrutinizing and assessing the plan every year
- Taking necessary measures for the prevention of the occurrence and expansion of financial consumer detriment
- Preventing the occurrence and expansion of consumer damage by online transactions
- Striving for reduction of food loss and waste so that the food good enough to eat is not wasted
- Strengthening international cooperation to address globalized consumer issues

Creating systems and environments for consumer activities

- Building basic systems related to consumer affairs such as rules for consumer contracts and systems for redress of consumer damage
- Striving to spread and promote whistleblower protection system

Aiming to create a consumer civil society

- Promoting consumer education in an integrated and consistent manner in collaboration with the Consumer Education Promotion Council established based on the Act on Promotion of Consumer Education

Supporting local consumer administration

- Helping consumers with problems by supporting the consultation service counter that plays frontline role in consumer affairs
- Supporting the local governments in creating a community to protect elderly consumers from consumer damage by sharing the information collected through consumer consultations

Checking commodity price movements

- Conducting discussions with the relevant ministries and agencies from the viewpoint of defending consumer benefits when public utility charges are to be revised
- Researching and disseminating information regarding price trends

Toward safe consumer life

- Collecting information concerning consumer accidents from consumers, business operators, and administrative organs and then registering such information in the Consumer Accident Information Databank
- Taking necessary measures for preventing the occurrence and expansion of damage affecting the life and/or health of consumers
- Promoting the project to protect children from accidents
- Promoting consumers understanding of food safety

Preventing a recurrence of an accident based on lessons learned

- Identifying the causes of consumer accidents affecting life and/or health by the Consumer Safety Investigation Commission established within the Consumer Affairs Agency to prevent the recurrence of accidents and expansion of consumer damage

Protecting consumers from scams

- Strictly enforcing the Act on Specified Commercial Transactions against fraudulent business practices

Establishing trusted representation for consumers informed decisions with proper labeling

- Strictly enforcing the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations against false labeling
- Establishing legal systems that encourage business operators to implement proper labeling
- Taking corrective actions for any labels impeding the pass-on of consumption tax

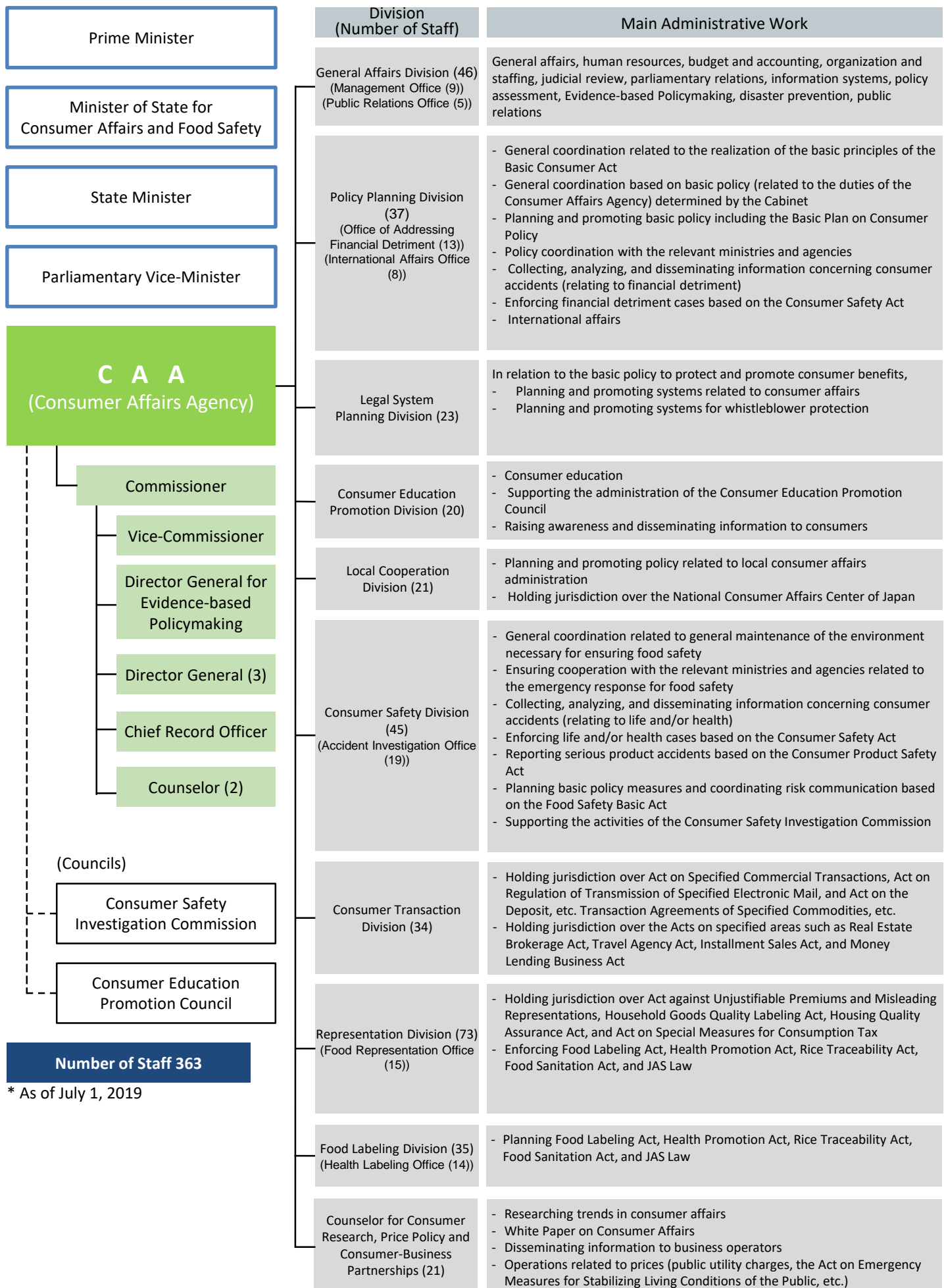
For informed food choices

- Striving to operate a food labeling system easily understandable and necessary for consumers

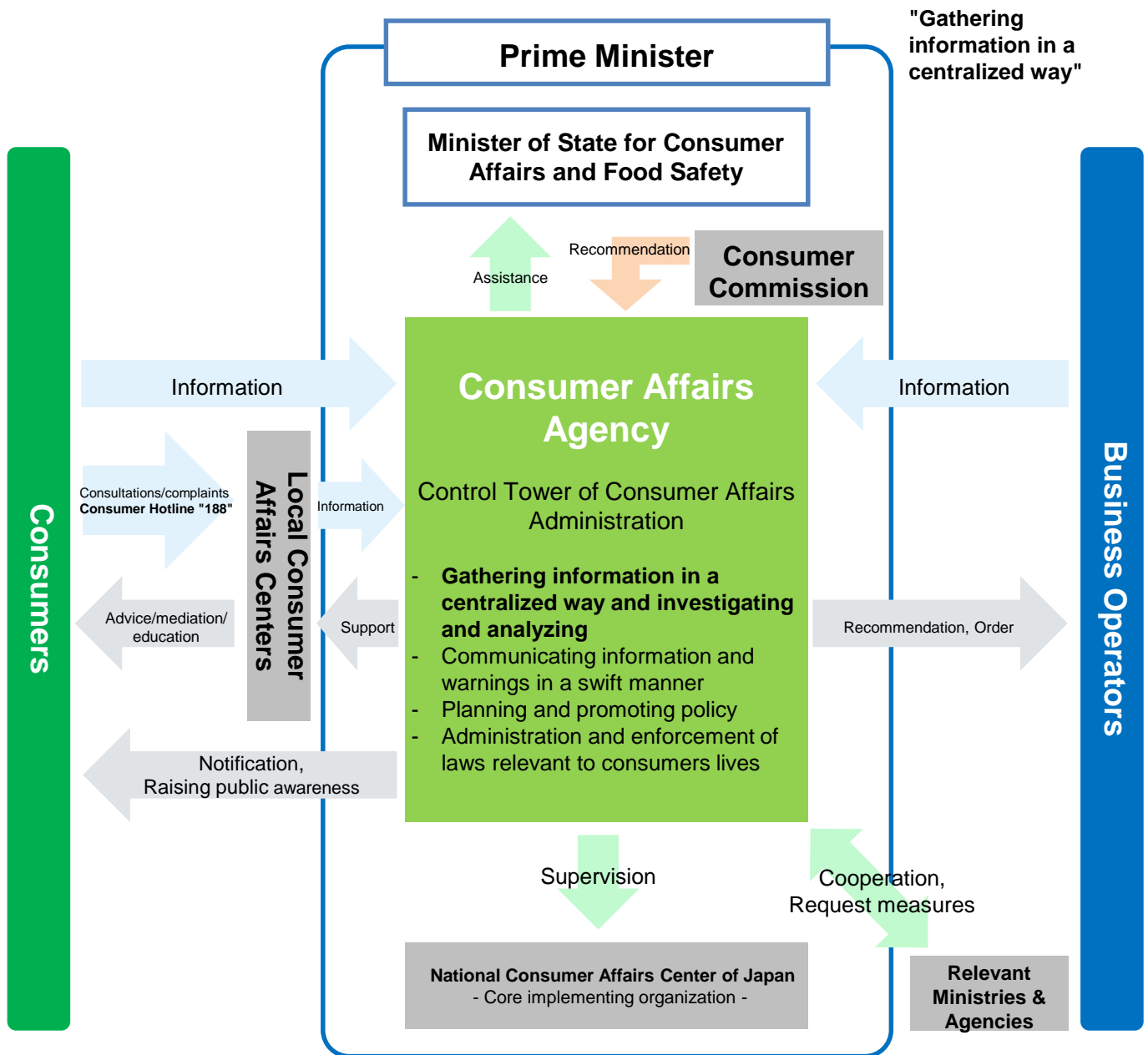
Various initiatives

- The Office of Consumer Policy Frontier
- Promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Conducting a survey on trends in consumer activities to plan more appropriate consumer policy
- Promoting consumer-oriented management (sustainable management)

Organization of Consumer Affairs Agency



Main functions of the Consumer Affairs Agency



Organizations associated with the Consumer Affairs Agency

[Consumer Commission]

The Consumer Commission was established on September 1, 2009 together with the Consumer Affairs Agency. As an independent, third-party organization, it investigates and deliberates different sorts of consumer-related problems and offers recommendations and opinions to the Prime Minister and the heads of relevant government ministries based on the investigation results as well as in response to their request for advice.

[National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan]

The National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan is an incorporated administrative agency supervised by the Consumer Affairs Agency and serves as a core institution on consumer affairs in cooperation with related organizations such as the national government and Consumer Affairs Centers located across Japan. Its main activities include the following:

- Advising related organizations such as Consumer Affairs Centers on how to handle difficult cases while providing consultation services to consumers who are unable to reach their nearest Consumer Affairs Centers.
- Collecting information on consultation cases at Consumer Affairs Centers and other organizations across the nation through the Practical Living Information Online Network System (PIO-NET).
- Analyzing the collected information on consumer consultation and conducting product tests to prevent the occurrence and expansion of consumer damage as well as utilizing the analysis and test results for educating and issuing alerts to consumers and making requests and providing information to related organization including administrative organs and business organizations.
- Providing upskill trainings to consumer affairs consultants and administrative officials handling consumer affairs in local governments, and organizing the qualification examination for consumer affairs consultants.
- Implementing ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) procedures for any consumer dispute of which solution is significant nationwide.

Addressing advanced consumer policy

Basic Plan on Consumer Policy

The Basic Plan on Consumer Policy is established by the government for promoting consumer policy, which includes a broad outline for consumer policy that will be pursued on a long-term basis and roadmap. This is decided by the Cabinet. It is established every 5 years, and current plan is effective until March 2020.

Outline of the Policy to be addressed in Five Years

1. Ensure consumer safety	2. Establish trusted labelling and ensure reliability	3. Establish proper transactions
<p>(1) Prevent accidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information on, and regulate the sale of, hazardous substances and goods 	<p>(1) Disseminate and strictly apply the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make business operators to strictly comply with laws and regulations through dissemination activities Use the administrative monetary penalty system for strict execution 	<p>(1) Strictly execute and review cross-sectional laws and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Specified Commercial Transactions Law and the Consumer Contract Act Use the adult guardianship program to protect the rights of the elderly and handicapped people
<p>(2) Collect accident information and prevent occurrence/aggravation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect more information from business operators regarding accidents of children/the elderly and call for appropriate attention 	<p>(2) Disseminate and improve labelling based on goods/services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve and apply labelling rules for things such as household goods, housing, cosmetic medicine 	<p>(2) Optimize transactions based on goods/services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the Telecommunications Business Act Consider revising the Installment Sales Act Conduct strict measures to prevent detriment by uninvited solicitation of commodity futures Encourage notifications of housing for the elderly and consider advance payment
<p>(3) Conduct accident investigations and prevent recurrence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the framework of the Consumer Safety Investigation Commission 	<p>(3) Provide appropriate information through food labelling and strictly apply relevant laws and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unify food labelling steadily Promote understanding of newly enforced labelling system for functions of foods and conduct further review 	<p>(3) Optimize transactions in response to information and telecommunications technology progress</p>
<p>(4) Ensure food safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Properly operate manufacturing process management and expand initiatives Provide accurate information on food and radioactive substances 		<p>(4) Prevent and crack down on crimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen regulations on special frauds
		<p>(5) Optimize standards and measuring</p>
4. Aim to create a society where consumers play a key role in making choices and taking actions	5. Establish a framework for consumer redress for damage and profit protection	6. Improve the system for consumer policy
<p>(1) Ensure policy transparency and reflect consumer opinions</p>	<p>(1) Promote redress for damage, complaint handling, and conflict resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider supporting Qualified Consumer Organizations financially and other means Consider building a system to deprive illicit proceeds and redress victims Encourage the use of the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) based on goods/services 	<p>(1) Enhance and strengthen the organizational structure of the government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the systems of the Consumer Affairs Agency, the Consumer Commission, and relevant ministries and agencies, as well as share information and strengthen cooperation among the organizations Strengthen the National Consumer Affairs Center consultation support function
<p>(2) Promote consumer education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer systematic consumer education based on life stages Consider revising the teaching guidelines Support establishing regional committees 	<p>(2) Address progress in advanced information and telecommunications society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the system to protect personal data 	<p>(2) Improve regional systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the system to provide quality consultation services for everyone regardless of place of residence Promote networks to "watch over" demented elderly people Secure human resources for consumer affairs consultants and their better treatment Promote public awareness on the Consumer Hotline number (188)
<p>(3) Support and promote initiatives of consumer groups, business operators and business organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support consumer group activities Promote consumer-oriented management 	<p>(3) Respond to globalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the consultation system for cross-border transaction problems Strengthen consultation services for foreign consumers 	
<p>(4) Promote fair and free competition and ensure proper public utility pricing</p>		
<p>(5) Promote eco-friendly consumer behaviours</p>		

* Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is set to each item (1), (2), ... KPI is set based on (1) status on laws, regulations and guidelines establishment and review, (2) status on public awareness, (3) status on progress of each policy and (4) the number and contents of consumer consultation cases.

Measures pursuant to the Consumer Safety Act to address financial consumer detriment

In accordance with the Consumer Safety Act, the Consumer Affairs Agency gathers information in a centralized way from administrative organs and local governments to analyze it.

Based on the analyzed information, the Consumer Affairs Agency takes prompt action to raise consumers awareness of improper conducts. In the event of any serious damage on a consumer's property that cannot be addressed by any other law (a so-called niche area case), the Consumer Affairs Agency also ensures that no consumer damage should occur or spread by making recourse to an administrative action including a recommendation against the business operator.

Addressing harm to consumers in the course of online transactions

The Consumer Affairs Agency considers measures to solve consumer problems caused by online transactions.

With the progress of advanced ICT society, the number of online transactions is on an upward trend. Consumers can easily make online deals with business operators both home and abroad, which is beneficial not only to the business side but also to the consumer side; however, consumers are exposed to the increased risk of having problems at the same time. In fact, a number of consumer problems arising out of online transactions are increasing, and the content of each problem is becoming diversified and complicated.

As problems involving online transactions are characterized by rapid changes in technology and service and by a diverse range of stakeholders, it is required to take measures against these problems in such a mutually complementary way as to encourage both business operators and consumers to make voluntary efforts and enhance their own decision making abilities respectively.

Thus, with the aim of sharing issues and encouraging stakeholders to take action, the Consumer Affairs Agency regularly organizes an "Online Consumer Transaction Meeting," attended by relevant administrative organs, business organizations, consumer organizations, and others, to provide a place for exchanges of information and inputs.

Efforts to reduce food loss and waste

Food loss and waste refers to the food that is good to eat but discarded. The amount of annual food loss and waste in Japan exceeds 6 million tons, about half of which is arising from general households.

An estimated amount of food loss and waste per capita in Japan reaches approx. 50kg per year, meaning that one bowl of food (approx. 140g) is wasted every day.

The main reasons for food loss and waste in households are as follows:

1. Too much to eat
2. Stale
3. Out of date



As part of the promotional activities for food loss and waste reduction aiming to eliminate any food going to be discarded, the Consumer Affairs Agency conducts education campaigns for consumers to help them understand the importance of buying and cooking as much food as is needed for the meals of the day, adding a twist to the daily menu such as leftover recipes, and eating up all served at restaurants while introducing various cases of the initiatives for food loss and waste reduction led by local authorities, private businesses, and students.

[Food loss and waste reduction initiative] National Campaign "NO-FOODLOSS PROJECT"
(Available in Japanese only)

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_policy/information/food_loss

International cooperation

The Consumer Affairs Agency strengthens international cooperation to address globalized consumer issues.

With the rapid progress of digitalization, there are a growing number of globalized consumer issues. Under such circumstances, it is indispensable to strengthen international cooperation and collaboration.

The Consumer Affairs Agency strives to enhance multilateral information sharing and cooperation through the participation in international organizations such as serving as the vice-chairperson at the OECD Committee on Consumer Policy while having policy dialogues with countries that have a strong tie to Japan to strengthen cooperative relationships.

In addition, the Cross-border Consumer center Japan (CCJ) established in the Consumer Affairs Agency in 2011 (relocated to the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan in 2015) supports Japanese consumers in solving problems arising out of business transactions with overseas business operators, if any, through its overseas counterparts having a cooperative relationship with CCJ. In the same way, CCJ gives support to overseas consumers having problems in their business transactions with Japanese business operators too upon receipt of notification from its overseas counterparts. CCS has 13 overseas partners covering 24 countries/regions as of March 2019.

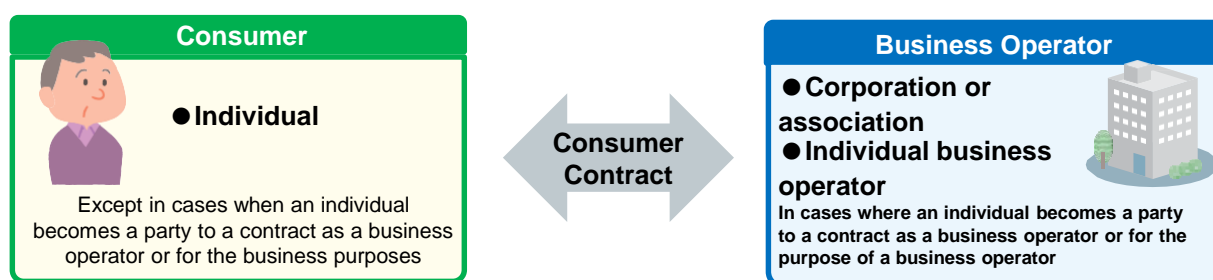
Creating systems and environments for consumer activities

Consumer Contract Act

When a consumer and a business operator enter into a contract for any goods or services, there is a disparity in the quality and quantity of information and negotiating power between them. Taking such conditions into account and to protect the interests of consumers, the Consumer Contract Act came into effect in 2001.

Pursuant to this Act, consumers can rescind any contracts concluded because of unjust solicitations. If a contract contains any unjust contract clauses, the applicable clauses will be void.

1. Definitions of "Consumer" and "Business Operator" in the Consumer Contract Act



The Act targets all kinds of contracts concluded between a **consumer** and a **business operator** (= **Consumer Contracts**).

2. Examples of rules in the Consumer Contract Act

Rescission of contracts concluded because of unjust solicitation



The business operator made a misrepresentation regarding an important matter to the consumer.

Nullity of contract clauses that impair the interests of consumers



Clauses that totally exempt the business operator from liability for damages are void.

Efforts of business operators and consumers



Business operators shall endeavor to provide the necessary information about the contract properly, and consumers shall endeavor to actively use the information.

Consumer Organization Collective Litigation System (Injunction demand)

Any Qualified Consumer Organizations certified by the Prime Minister can seek an injunction against unjust solicitations and contracts conducted by business operators based on the Consumer Organization Collective Litigation System (Injunction demand) introduced in 2007.

There are some cases that business operators revise the applicable clauses of the contract in response to the injunction requested by Qualified Consumer Organizations against their unjust solicitations and contracts. The business operator receiving an injunction demand is recommended to check its own business activities and take prompt action when misconducts are identified.

What is important to leverage the injunction demands for the prevention of an occurrence of damage is that consumers spontaneously provide Qualified Consumer Organizations with the information about the damage incurred by them. The results of injunction demands are posted on the websites of each Qualified Consumer Organization and the Consumer Affairs Agency.

Nationwide Qualified Consumer Organizations List (Available in Japanese only)

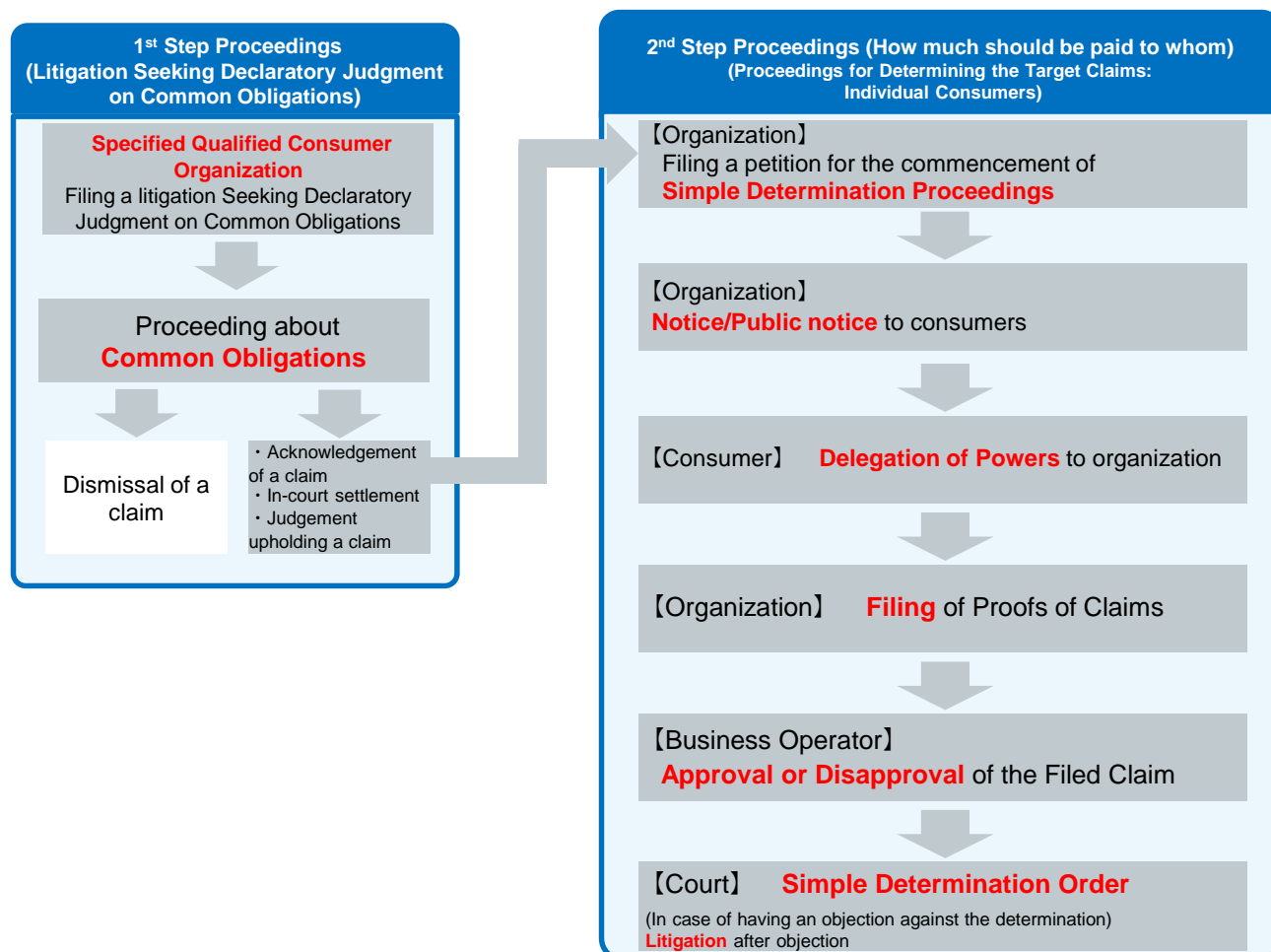
► https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_system/collective_litigation_system/about_qualified_consumer_organization/list/

Consumer Organization Collective Litigation System (Redress for damage)

The Consumer Organization Collective Litigation System (Redress for damage) is a two-step litigation system for the collective redress for consumer damage that was created following the Act on Special Measures Concerning Civil Court Proceedings for the Collective Redress for Property Damage Incurred by Consumers, taking into account the feature of consumer damage that one case of consumer damage is likely to be followed by many other similar cases that can easily spread.

Owing to the introduction of this system, the amount of time, costs, and manpower required for redress for damage are reduced, and it is expected that consumers feel free to initiate legal proceedings, which leads to the recovery of such consumer damage as has not been easily recovered so far.

Process flowchart of Consumer Organization Collective Litigation (Redress for damage)



Whistleblower protection system

In quite a number of instances, a case of corporate misconduct that compromises consumer safety comes into the open as a result of someone working for them reporting it. The whistleblower protection system is a means to protect whistleblowers so that they are not subjected to dismissal, demotion, or other disadvantageous treatment on the grounds that they reported the case as well as to ensure, by setting forth procedures such as what measures should be taken by business operators in relation to whistleblowing, that laws and regulations associated with consumer safety and interests are adhered to.

The Consumer Affairs Agency has developed and released to the public a handbook that describes the system, guidelines, and other information that can be helpful for business operators and administrative organs to establish and administer a pertinent structure.

The Consumer Affairs Agency has also set up the “Whistleblower Protection System Consultation Dial” as a point of contact for consultation about the system.

Information materials such as the handbook are available on the Whistleblower Protection System Webpage.

Whistleblower Protection System Consultation Dial (Available in Japanese only)
Phone: +81-3-3507-9262 (from 9:30 to 12:30 and from 13:30 to 17:30 on weekdays)
E-mail: g.koueki-soudan@caa.go.jp (For hearing-impaired people)

Whistleblower Protection System Webpage
▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/en/policy/consumer_system/

Aiming to create a consumer civil society

Advancing consumer education

The intention behind consumer education is to lead consumers to be able to live a safe and affluent life on their own by acquiring knowledge and skills associated with their consumption activities and link them to appropriate behavior. Another role of consumer education is to foster people so as to make them capable of spontaneously joining in the formation of a consumer civil society and contributing to its growth.

In December 2012, the Act on Promotion of Consumer Education came into effect for the purpose of promoting consumer education in a comprehensive and integrated fashion.

In accordance with this Act, the “Basic Policy on the Promotion of Consumer Education” was decided by the Cabinet in June 2013. It states that the national government and local governments should provide opportunities so that anyone, regardless of where he/she lives, can access consumer education in various settings, including school, home, community, and workplace, throughout a lifetime from young age to elderly. The basic policy was revised in March 2018 based on the implementation status of measures for promoting consumer education and in response to changes in the environment surrounding consumers.

The Consumer Education Promotion Council that was established pursuant to the Act on Promotion of Consumer Education discusses issues, such as whether to promote consumer education targeting young people, systematic consumer education designed to correspond with the characteristics of consumers, which were presented as “the current important matters” when the basic policy was revised. Also, the Consumer Affairs Agency strives to spread and create awareness of sustainable consumption among consumers as part of its initiative to create a consumer civil society. Sustainable consumption refers to consumer activities friendly to people, society, and the environment. Carefully thinking about the meaning, it is clear that each person engaging in consumer activities come up with a solution to social challenges or support business operators addressing such challenges. Moreover, sustainable consumption also serves as a specific model case of consumer behavior in the sense that consumers contribute to the creation of sustainable society as specified in Goal 12 of SDGs: “Responsible consumption and production.”

For the purpose of spreading sustainable consumption and creating awareness of it among consumers, the Consumer Affairs Agency conducts various promotional and educational activities such as collecting information about and publicly releasing initiatives on progressive approaches, producing awareness-raising leaflets, and creating a momentum in cooperation with entities in various fields in addition to holding the “Symposium on Sustainable Consumption” as an awareness-raising event while hoping that these events become a driving force of similar activities conducted by local governments.

Systematic Map for Consumer Education

	Characteristics of Each Stage	Infancy	Primary School	Junior High	High School	Adulthood		
		At this stage, you have various experiences of "awareness," through which you start to have interest in your family and things around yourself and learn from them.	At this stage, you are expected to develop the fundamental part of your ability as a consumer through your spontaneous behavior and interest in society and the environment.	At this stage, you become able to go to a lot of places, understand your rights and responsibilities, and then are expected to know a way to solve your problems.	At this stage, you are expected to understand the importance of life plan and management based on your lifelong forecast and social responsibilities, and spontaneously make your decisions.	Youth	Middle Age	The Elderly
Creating a Consumer Civil Society	Understanding Influence of Buying Activity	Have interest in running errands and shopping.	Think about the flow of things and money arising out of consumer activities.	Think about the influence of consumer behavior on the environment and economy.	Think about the influence of production, logistics, consumption and disposal on the environment, economy and society.	Get into the habit of thinking about the impact of production, logistics, consumption, and disposal on the environment, economy and society.	Put into your mind the impact on the environment, economy and society caused by production, logistics, consumption and disposal before acting.	Talk with other people about the importance of caring about the impact of consumer activities on the environment, economy, and society.
	Sustainable Buying Activity	Treasure your belongings.	Be aware that there is a correlation between your life and environment and add some twists to the way to use things.	Think about the influence of consumer activities on the environment and try to live in an environment-friendly manner.	Think about lifestyles aiming for sustainable society.	Explore lifestyles aiming for sustainable society.	Act according to a lifestyle appropriate for sustainable society.	Talk with other people about lifestyles useful for sustainable society.
	Consumer's Participation and Cooperation	Understand the importance of cooperation.	Pay your attention to consumer issues around you.	Think about solutions to consumer and social issues familiar to you and think about creating a fair society.	Understand the importance of addressing consumer/social issues familiar to you and creating a fair society in collaboration with other people.	Pursue more opportunities to act for realizing a fair society, solving consumer and other social issues.	Work with others in your community and workplace to solve consumer and other social issues, and create fair society.	Create fair society and solve consumer and other social issues in cooperation with other people.
Product Safety	Ability to Understand Product Safety and Avoid Risk	Identify risks in your life and find the way to use things safely.	Avoid risks and get clues to safely use things.	Avoid risks, learn a safe way to use things, and try it.	Understand the importance of aiming for a safe life and consumer society without taking risks.	Get into the habit of leading a safe life without taking risks.	Realize a safe life and consumer society without taking risks.	Talk with other people about the importance of a safe life without taking risks.
	Ability to Cope with Trouble	Inform people close to you of any troubles you have.	Talk with someone about your problems.	Understand the characteristics of marketing methods and learn about laws, legal systems, and consultation agencies for solving troubles.	Learn the usage of laws, legal systems, and consultation agencies for solving troubles.	Get into the habit of using laws, legal systems, and consultation agencies for solving troubles.	Create society that enables you to easily use laws, legal systems, and consultation agencies for solving troubles.	Use laws, legal systems, and consultation agencies in cooperation with other people.
Life Management and Contract	Understanding and Thinking about the Way to Choose Products/Services as well as Rules for Contracts	Keep your promise and rules.	Think about the way to choose and buy things and then make an appropriate purchase. Learn about the importance of promises and rules, and think about them.	Choose products in an appropriate manner, learn about a contract and its rules, and think about a better way to have a contract.	Act based on your appropriate decision making. Understand a contract and how to use its rules.	Get into the habit of understanding and carefully checking the details and rules of a contract before signing it.	Understand a contract and its rules and then utilize the knowledge for your life.	Share with other people useful knowledge for a life without contract-related troubles.
	Life Design /Management Ability	Think carefully when there is something you want and learn to be patient sometimes.	Realize the importance of things and money, and think of ways to use them according to the plan you make. Think carefully when you use your allowance.	Utilize your life management skills concerning consumer activities. Make a plan for shopping and saving money.	Try to design your life. Come up with ideas for a plan and management of your household economy based on your lifelong forecast.	Design and manage your life so that you can live in accordance with your life plan based on your lifelong forecast.	Cope with changes in economic society and lead a life according to your plan based on your lifelong forecast.	Cope with changes in your living environment and work with other people for better life management.
Information and Media	Ability to Collect/Transact/Transmit Information	Realize various information around you.	Understand the way to collect and utilize information about buying activity.	Acquire skills for collecting and transmitting information about consumer activities.	Think about the appropriate usage of information and information technologies taking into account not only internal affairs but also global relations.	Get into the habit of appropriately using information and information technologies.	Lead a life appropriately using information and information technologies.	Appropriately use information and information technologies in cooperation with other people.
	Understanding Rules of Information Society and Information Ethics	Treasure yourself and your family.	Understand information ethics such as protecting personal information about yourself and your acquaintances.	Learn about copyrights and responsibilities for the information you transmit.	Think about preferable information society, information ethics, and security.	Get into the habit of keeping to the rules of information society and information ethics.	Develop information society where there are not many troubles and information ethics are abided by.	Develop an information society where there are not many troubles and information ethics is abided by in cooperation with other people.
	Critical Thinking About Consumer Activity Information	Check information around you and think "Why."	Understand the purposes, characteristics, and importance of choosing consumer activity information.	Learn about the way to evaluate and select consumer activity information and know the importance of decision making.	Learn about the way to evaluate and choose consumer activities information and understand the relationship between such information and society.	Get into the habit of spontaneously examining the information about consumer activities.	Spontaneously evaluate information about consumer activities before acting.	Use consumer activity information in a smart manner by cooperating with other people.

*This systematic map systematically explains topics for consumers to learn at school and home or in a community to facilitate consumers' understanding and does not show correlations with educational guidelines.

This systematic map shows when and what you are expected to learn to become an independent consumer serving as a part of a consumer civil society. It functions as a diagram visualizing a consumer educational system for consumer education providers while working as something akin to a roadmap for each of you to develop individual abilities as a consumer.

Supporting local consumer administration

Supporting the frontline of consumer affairs administration

Consumer affairs centers located in municipalities and prefectures across the nation are the points of contact for consumers seeking consultation services.

The number of consultation cases brought to consumer affair centers across the nation was approximately 911,000 per year (FY2017). They operate as the frontline of consumer affairs administration by offering services such as providing information/advice to consulters and working as a liaison between consulters and business operators handling problems requiring conflict resolution. The Consumer Affairs Agency supports local governments with its financial assistance such as a grant to strengthen local consumer administration in order to improve consumer affairs centers in their municipalities and prefectures, address the existing consumer problems in their local communities, and handle new consumer problems in an appropriate manner.

First step to cope with problems: Consumer Hotline - 188

The Consumer Affairs Agency has created a "Consumer Hotline" that, by carrying a nationally common phone number, facilitates access to a nearby consumer consultation contact point to help consumers who do not know where to call for help. The Consumer Affairs Agency encourages consumers to use the Consumer Hotline for those who do not know where to turn to for consultation on consumer problems.



(Available in Japanese only)

Preventing harm to vulnerable consumers such as elderly consumers

To effectively prevent harm to vulnerable consumers such as elderly consumers, it is critical for the local community to "watch over" these people in accordance with their circumstances.

As for the elderly suffering dementia and people with disabilities, those who are around them must notice the signs of consumer problems to prevent the occurrence of such problems and stop the expansion of damage. Not only their families but also various community members need to cooperate with each other to strengthen "watch over" in their communities.

The revision of the Consumer Safety Act (June 2014) made it possible to organize the "Local Council for Ensuring Consumer Safety (Watch Over Network)." It is expected that the specific information that becomes the key factor to identify consumer damage in a community ("Trigger Information") leads to consultation at a consumer affairs center for sure. The Consumer Affairs Agency strives to encourage local governments to set up the Local Council for Ensuring Consumer Safety through various initiatives such as releasing the collection of actual cases.

In addition, the Consumer Affairs Agency supports the local governments working to establish the Local Council for Ensuring Consumer Safety by offering subsidies such as a grant to strengthen local consumer administration.

Checking commodity price movements

Public utility pricing policy

When public utility charges are to be revised, the Consumer Affairs Agency engages in discussions with the relevant ministries and agencies from the viewpoint of defending consumer benefits. In the event that any important decisions on or revisions of public utility charges are made in particular, the Consumer Affairs Agency responds to such decisions and revisions more strictly by submitting an agenda to a relevant ministerial meeting on commodity price issues.

Recent meetings of the Ministerial Council on Prices

Date	Matter discussed
February 28, 2014	Revision of public utility charges (railroad, bus, taxi, and tobacco) due to the consumption tax rate increase (*)
April 15, 2014	Rate revision of Chubu Electric Power Co., Inc.
October 14, 2014	Rate revision of Hokkaido Electric Power Co., Inc.
May 15, 2015	Rate revision of Kansai Electric Power Co., Inc.
June 26, 2015	Specification of price caps of NTT East and West
December 20, 2016	Reclassification of fares of public motor vehicle transportation services (in the special wards of Tokyo, Musashino-shi, and Mitaka-shi)
June 26, 2018	Specification of price caps of NTT East and West

Members of the Ministerial Council on Prices

- Chief Cabinet Secretary (chairperson)
- Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications
- Minister of Finance
- Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
- Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare
- Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry
- Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
- Minister of State for Financial Services
- Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety
- Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy

* Railroad: Fares of JR companies, 15 major private railways, Tokyo Metro, and public subways in the 6 major cities
Bus: Fares of 9 major private bus lines in Tokyo and public bus lines in the 6 major cities
Taxi: Taxi fares in the special wards of Tokyo
Tobacco: Retail list prices of manufactured tobacco

Measures for stabilizing prices of daily goods in emergency situation

The Consumer Affairs Agency investigates the market climate of daily goods and commodity price movements in collaboration with the related ministries and agencies to curb price increases of daily goods and prevent buying up or holding up sales of daily goods in emergency situations such as disasters.

Measures against price gouging

The Consumer Affairs Agency has set up the "Price Gouging Information and Consultation Dial" working as the point of contact exclusively for consumers and business operators seeking information and consultation services concerning price gouging that may occur when the consumption tax rate increases.

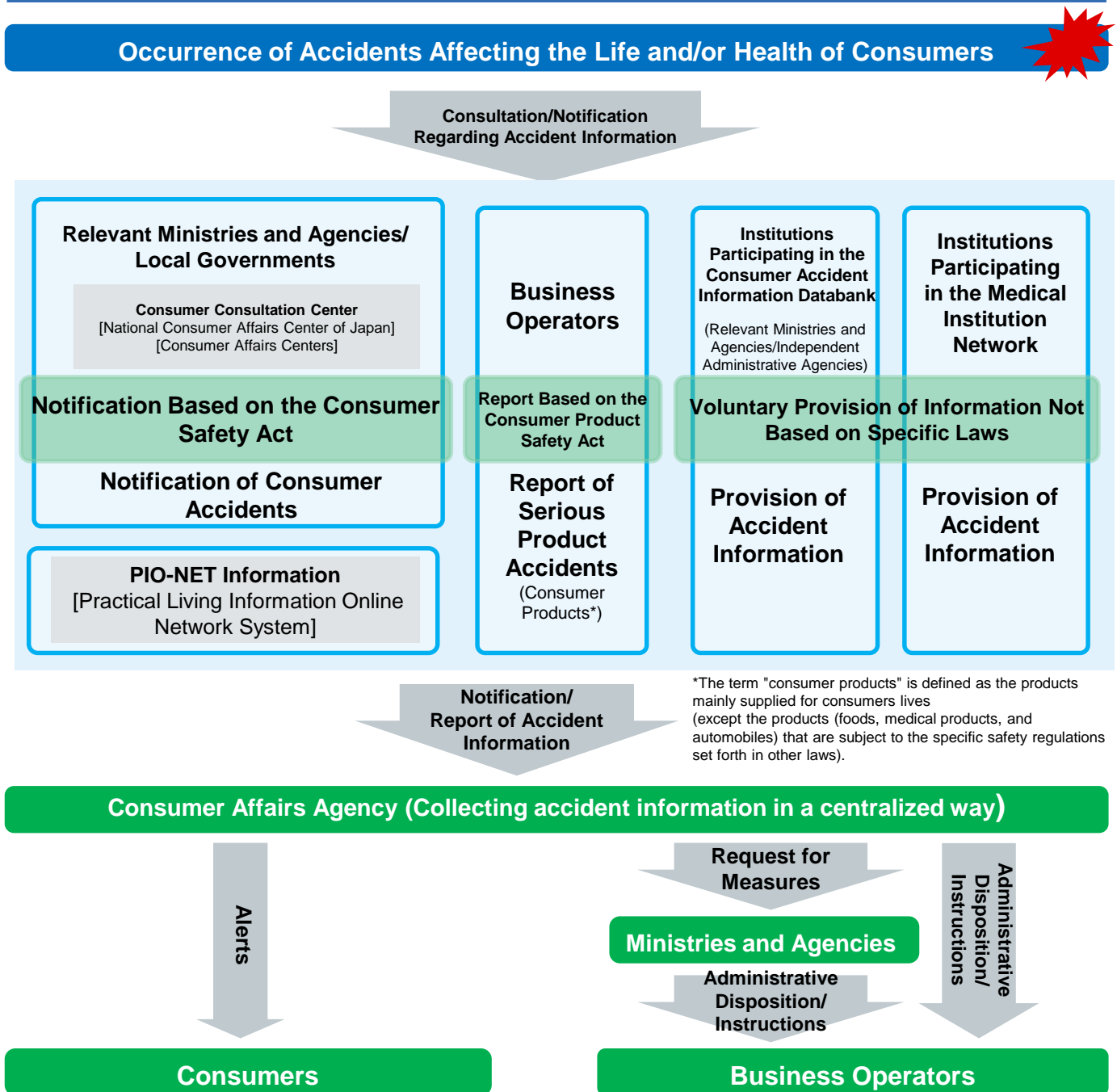
Price Gouging Information and Consultation Dial (Available in Japanese only)
Phone: 03-3507-9196 (from 9:00 to 17:00 on weekdays)

Commodity Price Monitor Survey

To accurately and promptly determine the key factors including price movements of daily goods (25 items), changes in consumer attitudes toward buying activities and commodity price movements, the Consumer Affairs Agency conducts Commodity Price Monitor Survey once a month targeting respondents living in various areas throughout the nation (2,000 respondents). Also, the Consumer Affairs Agency monitors commodity price movements more carefully by conducting investigations when the consumption tax rate is increased or in emergency situations such as disasters more precisely.

Toward safe consumer life

From collection of accident information to issuance of alerts



Collecting, analyzing, and releasing accident information

The Consumer Affairs Agency collects accident information in a centralized way upon receipt of notifications of consumer accidents from relevant administrative organs and other entities concerned to regularly releases accident information to the public in accordance with the Consumer Safety Act that was enacted when the Consumer Affairs Agency was established. The Consumer Affairs Agency also analyzes the collected accident information, and the analysis results are released to the public, provided to local governments, and reported to the Diet and the Consumer Commission.

On top of that, the Consumer Affairs Agency centralizes the collected accident information upon receipt of reports about serious product accidents from business operators to regularly release to the public in accordance with the Consumer Product Safety Act.

Measures against consumer damage affecting life and/or health pursuant to the Consumer Safety Act

To prevent the occurrence and expansion of consumer damage, it is required to promptly release the information necessary for consumers and issue alerts. Among the cases of consumer accidents on which the Consumer Affairs Agency collects information, if there are some cases whose damage is expected to become serious and spread, the Consumer Affairs Agency provides alerts to consumers to prevent the occurrence/recurrence of such accidents. Further, it is important that the entire administration including the relevant ministries and agencies copes with damage to prevent the occurrence or expansion of consumer accidents.

The Consumer Affairs Agency strives to prevent the occurrence or expansion of damage in cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies as well as the related organizations of local governments by exchanging information and having discussions with them. Furthermore, the Consumer Affairs Agency has in place a system to request the relevant ministries and agencies to take action pursuant to the laws in their jurisdictions (Request for Measures).

In the event of any cases that cannot be addressed by any other laws (so-called niche area cases), the Consumer Affairs Agency can directly take action against the applicable business operator.

Medical Institution Network

The Medical Institution Network was developed aiming to steadily promote initiative to collect accident information and utilize such information for preventing recurrence concerning victims getting involved in accidents that arise out of goods or services they have bought, receiving damage on their life and/or health, and using medical institutions. This initiative is being conducted as a joint project between the Consumer Affairs Agency and National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan gaining cooperation from the 24 medical institutions registered as of the end of March 2019. The Consumer Affairs Agency utilizes the information received from the medical institutions in the network mainly when alerting consumers.

Consumer Accident Information Databank

The Consumer Affairs Agency developed the Consumer Accident Information Databank in cooperation with the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan as a system to centralize and utilize information about consumer accidents and created an access environment that enables consumers to freely use the Databank online since April 1, 2010.

The Consumer Accident Information Databank started with the accident information consisting of 15,500 cases registered as the data since FY 2009 and increased to 239,808 cases as of March 31, 2019 as a result of registering and updating data on a daily basis.

Consumer Accident Information Databank (Available in Japanese only)

► <http://www.jikojoho.go.jp/>

Collection and provision of recalled products information

The Consumer Affairs Agency operates the “Consumer Affairs Agency Recall Information Site” that collects recall information about all genres of consumer goods such as cars, housing equipment, home electric appliances, sports/leisure products, toys, daily products, cosmetics, and food products to provide consumers with easy access to such information. Through this site, the Consumer Affairs Agency releases the recall information submitted by the relevant ministries and agencies based on laws/regulations, and the information directly reported by business operators such as:

1. Information about refund and replacement
2. Information about inspection and repair
3. Alert information concerning products

On this website, the e-mail broadcasting service is available for the recall information newly reported and information about serious incidents caused by recall products. Users also can receive recall information specific to products for the elderly or children per registration.

If you have any products subject to recall, please immediately stop using such products and contact the business operator.



Recall Information Site (Available in Japanese only)

▶ <https://www.recall.caa.go.jp/>

Registration for E-mail Service (Available in Japanese only)

▶ <https://www.recall.caa.go.jp/service/register.php>

Projects to Protect Children from Accidents

The Consumer Affairs Agency has launched the "Projects to Protect Children from Accidents" to prevent "unforeseen accidents," one of the leading causes of deaths of children aged 0 to 14, and is committed to a reduction of such accidents.

Child Safety E-mail Newsletter from the Consumer Affairs Agency /Official Twitter account of "Protecting Children from Accidents"

The Consumer Affairs Agency provides some tips on child accident prevention and alert information via its e-mail newsletter and Twitter account as needed.

Please utilize this service to protect your children from unforeseen accidents.

Introduction of Child Safety Email Newsletter/Twitter (Available in Japanese only)

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_safety/child/project_001/

Child Accident Prevention Handbook

This booklet provides information about the most common unforeseen accidents among children aged 0 to 6 (pre-school children), the way to prevent such accidents, and tips for coping with such an accident if it occurs.

Child Accident Prevention Handbook

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_safety/child/project_002/pdf/child_project_002_en_190701_0001.pdf

Playing the leading role in food safety and deepening consumers understanding of it

In Japan, the relevant ministries and agencies conduct various initiatives to promote food safety in cooperation with one another. The Consumer Affairs Agency takes the initiative in conducting such initiatives. In addition, the Consumer Affairs Agency strives for the enhancement of risk communication and provision of accurate information concerning food safety through various topics such as the concept of food safety and health food so that consumers can become independent-minded in their buying behavior by acquiring the correct knowledge about food safety scientifically proved. The nuclear power plant accidents that resulted from the Great East Japan Earthquake have caused considerable concerns about food safety to consumers, and the accidents have also given rise to harmful rumors of local food products from the disaster areas.

The Consumer Affairs Agency supplies the accurate information about radiation and food safety to consumers through the leaflet "Food and Radiation Q&A" on the website and also regularly holds symposia in various locations, where consumers have opportunities to discuss this issue with experts.

Further, the Consumer Affairs Agency rents out radioactive substance testing equipment to local governments in cooperation with the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan so that consumers can check, by themselves, the radioactive substances contained in food to ensure safety.

Preventing a recurrence of an accident based on lessons learned

Consumer Safety Investigation Commission

The Consumer Safety Investigation Commission was established in the Consumer Affairs Agency in October 2012. It investigates accidents affecting the life and/or health of consumers to determine the causes of the accidents and to find measures to prevent their recurrence and expansion. Based on the results of the investigation, it offers recommendations and opinions to the Prime Minister and/or the heads of corresponding ministries. It releases to the public a report on accidents affecting life and/or health in the fields of products, foods, facilities, and services after a commission consisting of intellectuals deliberates.

Scope of investigation

Consumer accidents affecting life and/or health

*Including accidents that occurred before the enforcement of the applicable acts

- Consumer accidents affecting life and/or health in a wide range of fields such as products, foods, facilities, and services (Except for accidents that are in the scope of investigation of the Japan Transport Safety Board)
- Accidents whose causes must be investigated to prevent the occurrence and expansion of accidents affecting life and/or health and to mitigate the damage caused by such accidents

Flow of investigation into the causes of accidents to submission of recommendations

Triger information

- Accident information affecting life and/or health
- Request for investigation from consumers → Effectively selecting accident cases subject to cause investigations

Investigation into the causes of accidents

● Investigation into the causes of accidents (conducted by the Commission)

Exercising its authority to investigate to the extent that it requires
Consumer accidents for which necessary investigations are not sufficiently made
[Authority to investigate] Collection of reports, on-site investigations, and questions

● Evaluating the results of investigations by other administrative organs

Evaluating the results of investigations by other administrative organs and providing opinion if necessary

Recommendations to prevent the occurrence and expansion of accidents

Measures and actions to be taken to prevent the occurrence and expansion of accidents affecting life and/or health and to mitigate the damage caused by such accidents

- Submitting recommendations and opinions to the Prime Minister
- Submitting opinions to the heads of the corresponding ministries

Various preventive measures for accidents affecting life/health and expansion of damage by corresponding ministries (including the Consumer Affairs Agency)

- Planning and executing measures to prevent the occurrence and expansion of accidents
- Recommendations and orders given by the relevant administrative organ to the business operators in the fields in its jurisdiction
- Alerts to consumers

Protecting consumers from scams

What is the Specified Commercial Transactions Law?

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act (formerly "Door-to-Door Sales Act (Act on Door-to-Door Sales, etc.)") is an Act for with the purpose of preventing business operators' illegal, or malicious solicitation while protecting consumer benefits. Specifically, rules that business operators should obey, and rules for protecting consumers. such as, the cooling-off system, are specified for types of transactions which tend to cause consumer problems such as Door-to-Door Sales or Mail Order Sales.

Types of transactions subject to the Specified Commercial Transactions Act

Door-to-Door Sales



Door-to-Door Sales are transactions such as the sale of goods or rights or the provision of services for which a business operator visits a consumer's domicile and concludes a contract, unscrupulous sales on the street, or appointment sales.

Mail Order Sales



Mail Order Sales are transactions in which a business operator distributes advertisements via newspapers, magazines, websites, or other media, and receives an offer by communication means such as postal mail or telephone. It includes "internet auctions," but excludes those that fall under "Telemarketing Sales."

Telemarketing Sales



Telemarketing Sales are transactions in which a business operator solicits a consumer and receives an offer by telephone. It is applicable to cases in which a consumer makes an offer via postal mail or by telephone after hanging up the phone.

Multilevel Marketing Transactions



Multilevel Marketing Transactions are transactions of goods or services by a sales organization sequentially expanded by soliciting a person to be a salesperson, and having the salesperson solicit another person to be a salesperson.

Provision of Specified Continuous Services



Provisions of Specified Continuous Services are transactions in which the provision of long-term and continuous services is promised in exchange for the payment of expensive fees. Currently, seven services are included such as esthetic salons, language schools, home tutors, cram schools, marriage agencies, and personal computer schools.

Business Opportunity Sales Transactions



Business Opportunity Sales Transactions are transactions in which a consumer is solicited on the grounds that "income will be gained through the job that will be offered," and made to buy and bear the cost of goods, etc., said to be necessary for the job.

Door-to-Door Purchase



Door-to-Door Purchase means a transaction in which a business operator visits a consumer's house, etc., and purchases articles.

Outline of the Specified Commercial Transactions Act

1. Administrative Controls

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act performs the following control on business operators according to the characteristics of each type of transaction in terms of the provision of appropriate information to consumers.

A violation of the Specified Commercial Transactions Act is subject to an instruction of business improvement, administrative disposition of business suspension order or penalties.

- **Obligation of clear indication of names**

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act obliges a business operator to inform consumers of its name, or the fact that its purpose is to solicit the consumers, prior to solicitation.

- **Prohibition of unjust solicitation**

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act prohibits the misrepresentation of prices or payment conditions, or intentional failure to disclose them, and prohibits solicitation by using intimidation to overwhelm a consumer.

- **Advertising control**

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act obliges business operators to display important matters when placing an advertisement, and prohibits false or misleading advertisements.

- **Obligation of document delivery**

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act obliges business operators to deliver a document that contains important matters upon conclusion of a contract.

2. Civil Rules

In order to enhance its functions as a law to prevent problems between consumers and business operators or to facilitate the provision of remedies, the Specified Commercial Transactions Act allows the cancellation or rescission of a contract by a consumer (cooling-off), and specifies rules that limit unreasonable claims for damages by business operators.

- **Cooling-off**

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act allows "cooling-off." Cooling-off means the unconditional cancellation of a contract after making an offer for a contract or concluding a contract, within a certain period(*) after receiving documents specified in laws.

(*)8 days for Door-to-Door Sales, Telemarketing Sales, Provision of Specified Continuous Services and Door-to-Door Purchase; 20 days for Multilevel Marketing Transactions and Business Opportunity Sales Transactions. There are no provisions of cooling-off for Mail Order Sales.

- **Rescission of the manifested intention**

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act allows consumers to rescind their manifested intention to offer a contract or to accept such offer, when they manifested such intention under misunderstanding as a result of a business operator's misrepresentation or intentional failure to disclose facts.

- **Limitation to the amount of damages**

The Specified Commercial Transactions Act sets an upper limit to the amount of damages which business operators may claim in cases such as when consumers cancel a contract midterm.

Act

Act on Specified Commercial Transactions (Act No. 57 of 1976) (Last amendment: April 25, 2014)

Establishing trusted representation for consumers informed decisions with proper labeling

Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations - Rules on fair labeling

A quality and price information label is an important factor in choosing goods or services.

False or misleading representations may sway consumers into buying goods or services that are actually of poor quality or overvalued. The Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations prohibits such misleading representations. The Consumer Affairs Agency strives to ensure proper environment for shopping according to the Act.

These types of labeling are prohibited:

Leading to misunderstanding that the goods/services are superior to what they actually are

[Example]

A flyer claims "Natural diamonds are used," but what are actually used are all synthetic diamonds.



Leading to misunderstanding that the trade terms are more advantageous to consumers than they actually are

[Example]

A storefront poster claims "Foreign currency savings interests; Now ○○%," but the actual amount receivable is 1/3 or less of the amount claimed.



Leading to other types of misunderstanding

[Example]

A closing label claims "Made in the UK," but the cloth was actually manufactured in a country other than the UK.



There are rules for premiums

If companies try to be competitive in the market by offering excessive free gifts or additional services, consumers may be swayed into buying goods or services that are of poor quality or overvalued. To avoid this, the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations prohibits the offering of excessive premiums. The Consumer Affairs Agency strives to create an environment where companies can compete with one another by focusing on the quality and prices of goods and services so that consumers can make good choices regarding such goods and services.



Fair competition code

The fair competition code is a voluntary rule on labeling and premiums established by business operators or business organizations certified by the Japan Fair Trade Commission and the Commissioner of the Consumer Affairs Agency. In accordance with this code, some companies print a "Fairness mark" on their product packages or display it at the storefront. These marks are the icons of proper shopping.

[Fairness mark examples]

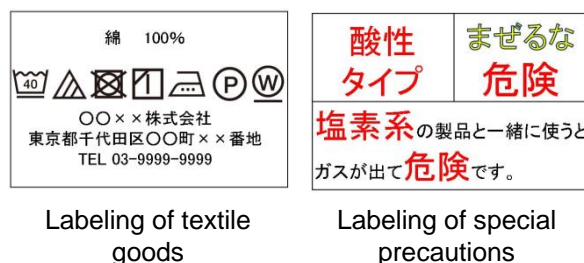


Household Goods Quality Labeling Act

People use various types of household goods in their daily lives.

The Household Goods Quality Labeling Act requires the labeling of information about products such as components, performance, and usage to help consumers to properly understand the quality of household goods when they purchase and/or use them. The Consumer Affairs Agency strives to create an environment where consumers can choose and use household goods properly according to the Act.

[Examples of labeling in accordance with the Household Goods Quality Labeling Act]



Taking corrective actions for any labels impeding the pass-on of consumption tax

The Act Concerning Special Measures for Pass-on of Consumption Tax came into effect on October 1, 2013 aiming to ensure that consumption tax is smoothly and appropriately passed on to counterparties at the time when consumption tax ratio is to increase.

Under this Act, the Consumer Affairs Agency is cracking down on advertising and promotional activities offering a discount equivalent to the amount of consumption tax such as "Consumption Tax Discount Sale." The brochures that easily explain about the initiatives concerning the pass-on of consumption tax, the guidelines for the Act Concerning Special Measures for Pass on of Consumption Tax, and other helpful information are available on the website of the Consumer Affairs Agency.

Act Concerning Special Measures for Pass-on of Consumption Tax

(Available in Japanese only)

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/representation/consumption_tax/

For informed food choices

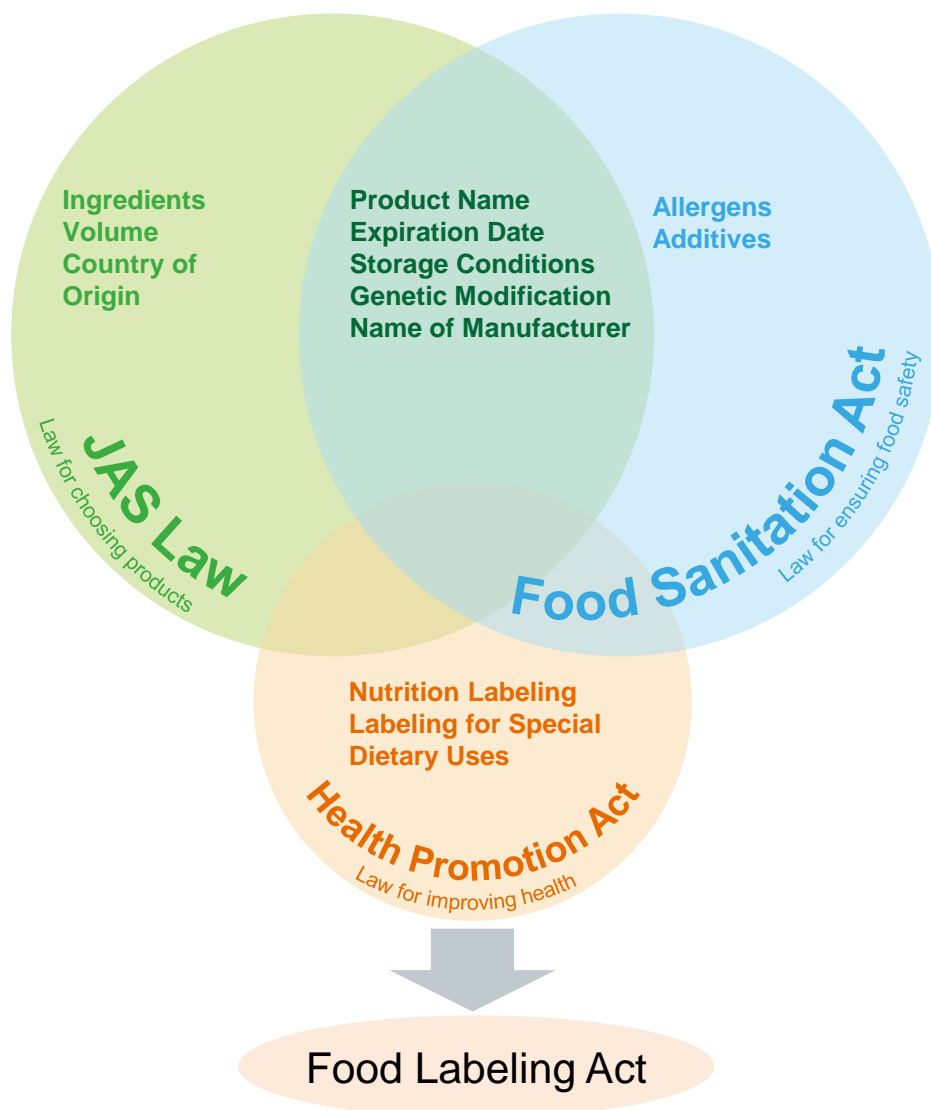
Food Labeling Act

Food Labeling plays an important role in ensuring consumer safety and creating an opportunity for consumers to make autonomous and reasonable choices, which is regarded as consumers right in the Basic Consumer Act.

The Food Labeling Act came into effect on April 1, 2015. The rules on food labeling of the three acts that used to set forth general rules on food labeling, namely, the Food Sanitation Act, JAS Law, and Health Promotion Act, were integrated into a comprehensive and centralized system for food labeling.

Integrated Food Labeling System

(Relationships among the JAS Law, Food Sanitation Act, and Health Promotion Act)



Under the new food labeling system, necessary changes including the improvement of the existing food labeling system were made in addition to the integration of the three acts as mentioned above.

Major changes to the system:

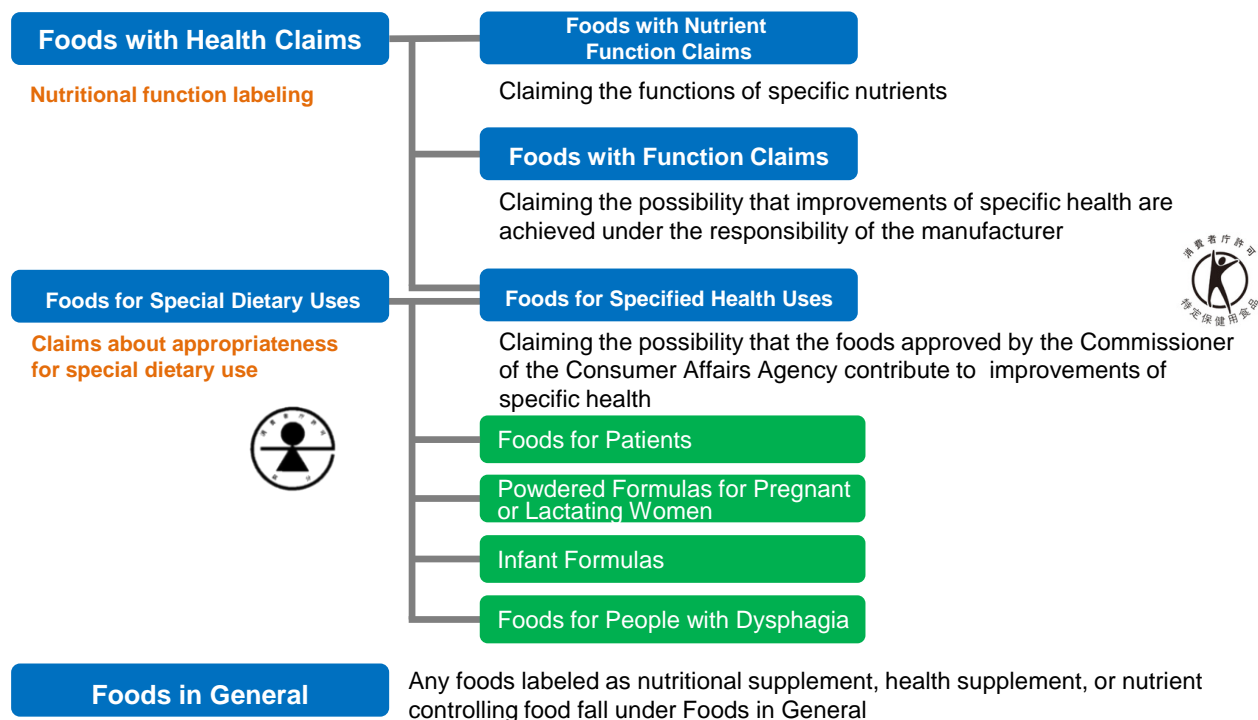
- Obligatory labeling of nutrient declaration
- Improvement of rules for allergen labeling
- Establishment of the "Foods with Function Claims" system

Labeling systems concerning health and nutrition

Labeling of Nutrition Facts

Nutrition facts are labeled on packaged foods such as processed foods. Also, some foods have nutrition claims and nutrient reference values in their labels. The nutrition facts labeled on a food product indicate the nutritional characteristics of the food such as caloric content and volume of nutrients.

Further, the following systems are available for claiming the functions of ingredients and special purposes of use.



Foods with Health Claims

Foods with Health Claims is the generic term for three kinds of labeling systems for the functions of ingredients contained in food products with the purpose of maintaining and improving health. It consists of Foods with Nutrient Function Claims, Foods with Function Claims, and Foods for Specified Health Uses.

Foods with Nutrient Function Claims

Foods with Nutrient Function Claims can be used to supplement or complement daily nutrients (vitamins/minerals) that tend to be insufficient in everyday diet. Given that a food product contains certain amounts of nutrient whose function meets Food Labeling Standards, it can bear a nutrient function claim as prescribed by the Standards without submitting a notification to the government.

Foods with Function Claims

Foods with Function Claims are foods allowed to bear a scientific, evidence-based claim that the functional ingredients can be beneficial to improvements of specific health under the responsibility of its manufacturer. Information about the safety of and justification for the efficacy gained from the functional ingredients must be submitted to the Commissioner of the Consumer Affairs Agency before the product is launched.



Foods for Specified Health Uses

Foods for Specified Health Uses are foods allowed to bear claims that users can expect improvements of specific health such as “help keep your digestive system healthy.” To launch a product as Foods for Specified Health Uses, it is essential to obtain permission from the Commissioner of the Consumer Affairs Agency after the government evaluates the claimed effects and safety.

Foods for Special Dietary Uses

Foods for Special Dietary Uses are foods allowed to have claims about special purposes of use such as support for infant growth and the health care or recovery of pregnant/lactating women, patients with dysphagia, and other patients. It is essential to obtain permission from the Commissioner of the Consumer Affairs Agency to market foods with such claims.

About the Office of Consumer Policy Frontier

On July 24, 2017, the Consumer Affairs Agency and the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan established the Office of Consumer Policy Frontier (hereinafter referred to as “the Office”) in Tokushima prefecture as the base for the development and creation of consumer administration having evidence-based analysis and research functions.

The Office intensively conducts model projects in pursuit of nation-wide deployment in addition to theoretical/advanced investigation and research that have not been fully addressed so far. In the field of theoretical/advanced investigation and research, the Office conducts research and analysis as part of the basic research based on academic knowledge to prepare basic materials for policy planning. Further, the Office uses some areas in Tokushima prefecture for field demonstrations in model projects to verify the effect of promotional/educational initiatives aiming for nationwide deployment and collect cases of other initiatives concerning consumer policy.

In many projects, the Office has achieved satisfactory outcomes ahead of its counterparts across the nation and strives to further develop the entire consumer administration and improve the Consumer Affairs Agency’s capability of policy planning by deploying such outcomes on a nationwide basis.

In addition, the Office is being positioned as the “Base for the Consumer Affairs Agency’s Workstyle Reforms,” and all staff members strive to work in an effective manner.

Promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were agreed upon at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015 place importance on the roles of all parties concerned to address a wide range of challenges about economy, society, and environment and then consist of the 17 international goals that must be achieved by 2030, aiming for a society where no one will be left behind.

In Japan, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Promotion Headquarters led by the Prime Minister was established to create guidelines for mapping out strategies and conducting measures to achieve the goals.

The Consumer Affairs Agency promotes various measures based on the Basic Plan on Consumer Policy with the mission to realize society where people can live a safe, worry-free and affluent life so that the Consumer Affairs Agency can contribute to the achievement of these international goals.

Specifically, the following seven initiatives are included in the “Expanded Action Plan 2019” that was decided at the SDGs Promotion Headquarters in June 2019.

1. Promotional and educational activities for sustainable consumption
2. Child accident prevention
3. Food loss and waste reduction
4. Local Council for Ensuring Consumer Safety (Watch Over Network) for elderly consumers and challenged consumers
5. Promotion of consumer-oriented management (sustainable management)
6. Whistleblower Protection System
7. G20 International Conference on Consumer Policy

Promotion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Consumer Policy

(Available in Japanese only)

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/about_us/about/plans_and_status/sdgs/

Investigations on trends in consumer activities

The Consumer Affairs Agency carries out investigations on and analyses of the environment surrounding consumers and their awareness to plan more appropriate consumer policy. The Consumer Affairs Agency releases the White Paper once a year containing the finding of such investigation, analysis and the progress of consumer policy planned by the government.

Important topics of the times featured in the White Paper are intensively investigated and analyzed in there. “Consumption by the youth” and “Toward the prevention of children’s accidents” were featured in the White Paper in FY 2017 and FY 2018, respectively.

In addition, the Consumer Affairs Agency annually conducts the “Basic Survey on Consumer Life” to grasp the status quo of consumer issues and what policy is required by consumers focusing on consumers awareness and behavior in their daily lives and experience of consumer harm and problems.

White Paper on Consumer Affairs

► https://www.caa.go.jp/en/publication/annual_report/

Basic Survey on Consumer Life

► https://www.caa.go.jp/en/policy/consumer_research/

Aiming for promotion of consumer-oriented management (Sustainable Management)

To realize a sustainable and better society, it is necessary to collaborate with consumers and business operators as well as administrative organs. Based on the belief that consumer-oriented business activities (sustainable management) help realize sound markets, the Consumer Affairs Agency promotes consumer-oriented management led by business operators.



The Consumer Affairs Agency established the consumer-oriented management promotional organization with consumer organization and business organization to deploy promotional activities such as the “voluntary declaration of consumer-oriented management and follow-up activities” across the nation.

What is consumer-oriented management?

Consumer-oriented management is what enables business operators to have/become:

General consumers viewpoints

- Consider ensuring consumers rights and increasing their benefits to be the essential part of business from the consumers viewpoint as a whole.

Providers of sound market

- Gain consumers trust as providers of sound markets by ensuring consumers safety and the fairness of trade and providing necessary information to consumers.

Awareness of social responsibility

- Conduct business activities acknowledging social responsibilities while working toward to build a sustainable and desirable society.

*Not necessarily limited to business operators dealing directly with consumers.



Engage in a deeper level of communication with consumers

Scheme of Voluntary Declaration of Consumer-Oriented Management/Follow-Up Activities

Business Operators

Declaration

-Voluntary declaration/announcement of initiatives by each business operator (philosophy, policy, specific achievements, plans)

Action

-Implementing such initiatives as declared or announced

Outcome

-Announcing the outcomes gained from and the details about the implemented initiatives (follow-up)

Promotional Organizations

Visualization

- Releasing the details about the announced initiatives to consumers and society (promotional organization's websites)
- Awareness-raising activities through symposia and seminars
- Awarding prizes for excellent cases (award for good practices of consumer-oriented management)



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全国共通の電話番号
消費者ホットライン



消費者ホットライン188
イメージキャラクター
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