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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.
## 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**

**Prime Minister**
- Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety
- State Minister
- Parliamentary Vice-Minister

**CA A** (Consumer Affairs Agency)

- Commissioner
- Vice-Commissioner
- Director General for Evidence-based Policymaking
- Director General (3)
- Chief Record Officer
- Counselor (2)

(Councils)
- Consumer Safety Investigation Commission
- Consumer Education Promotion Council

**Number of Staff 363**
* As of July 1, 2019

**General Affairs Division**
(Number of Staff: 46)
(Management Office: 9)
(Public Relations Office: 5)

**Main Administrative Work**
- General affairs, human resources, budget and accounting, organization and staffing, judicial review, parliamentary relations, information systems, policy assessment, Evidence-based Policymaking, disaster prevention, public relations

**Policy Planning Division**
(Number of Staff: 37)
(Office of Addressing Financial Detriment: 13)
(International Affairs Office: 8)

- General coordination related to the realization of the basic principles of the Basic Consumer Act
- General coordination based on basic policy (related to the duties of the Consumer Affairs Agency) determined by the Cabinet
- Planning and promoting basic policy including the Basic Plan on Consumer Policy
- Policy coordination with the relevant ministries and agencies
- Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information concerning consumer accidents (relating to financial detriment)
- Enforcing financial detriment cases based on the Consumer Safety Act
- International affairs

**Legal System Planning Division**
(Number of Staff: 23)

- In relation to the basic policy to protect and promote consumer benefits,
  - Planning and promoting systems related to consumer affairs
  - Planning and promoting systems for whistleblower protection

**Consumer Education Promotion Division**
(Number of Staff: 20)

- Consumer education
- Supporting the administration of the Consumer Education Promotion Council
- Raising awareness and disseminating information to consumers

**Local Cooperation Division**
(Number of Staff: 21)

- Planning and promoting policy related to local consumer affairs administration
- Holding jurisdiction over the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan

**Consumer Safety Division**
(Number of Staff: 45)
(Accident Investigation Office: 19)

- General coordination related to general maintenance of the environment necessary for ensuring food safety
- Ensuring cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies related to the emergency response for food safety
- Collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information concerning consumer accidents (relating to life and/or health)
- Enforcing life and/or health cases based on the Consumer Safety Act
- Reporting serious product accidents based on the Consumer Product Safety Act
- Planning basic policy measures and coordinating risk communication based on the Food Safety Basic Act
- Supporting the activities of the Consumer Safety Investigation Commission

**Consumer Transaction Division**
(Number of Staff: 34)

- Holding jurisdiction over Act on Specified Commercial Transactions, Act on Regulation of Transmission of Specified Electronic Mail, and Act on the Deposit, etc. Transaction Agreements of Specified Commodities, etc.
- Holding jurisdiction over the Acts on specified areas such as Real Estate Brokerage Act, Travel Agency Act, Installment Sales Act, and Money Lending Business Act

**Representation Division**
(Number of Staff: 73)
(Food Representation Office: 15)

- Holding jurisdiction over Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations, Household Goods Quality Labeling Act, Housing Quality Assurance Act, and Act on Special Measures for Consumption Tax
- Enforcing Food Labeling Act, Health Promotion Act, Rice Traceability Act, Food Sanitation Act, and JAS Law

**Food Labeling Division**
(Number of Staff: 35)
(Health Labeling Office: 14)

- Planning Food Labeling Act, Health Promotion Act, Rice Traceability Act, Food Sanitation Act, and JAS Law

**Counselor for Consumer Research, Price Policy and Consumer-Business Partnerships**
(Number of Staff: 21)

- Researching trends in consumer affairs
- White Paper on Consumer Affairs
- Disseminating information to business operators
- Operations related to prices (public utility charges, the Act on Emergency Measures for Stabilizing Living Conditions of the Public, etc.)
Main functions of the Consumer Affairs Agency

Control Tower of Consumer Affairs Administration
- Gathering information in a centralized way and investigating and analyzing
- Communicating information and warnings in a swift manner
- Planning and promoting policy
- Administration and enforcement of laws relevant to consumers lives

Information
Advice/mediation/education
Support
Notification, Raising public awareness

Prime Minister
Minister of State for Consumer Affairs and Food Safety
Consumer Commission

Consumers
Business Operators

About the Consumer Affairs Agency

Gathering information in a centralized way
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Ensure consumer safety</th>
<th>2. Establish trusted labelling and ensure reliability</th>
<th>3. Establish proper transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Prevent accidents</td>
<td>(1) Disseminate and strictly apply the Act</td>
<td>(1) Strictly execute and review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide information on,</td>
<td>against Unjustifiable Premiums and</td>
<td>cross-sectional laws and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and regulate the</td>
<td>Misleading Representations</td>
<td>regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sale of, hazardous</td>
<td>• Make business operators to strictly</td>
<td>• Review the Specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substances and goods</td>
<td>comply with laws and regulations through</td>
<td>Commercial Transactions Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dissemination activities</td>
<td>and the Consumer Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use the administrative monetary penalty</td>
<td>Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>system for strict execution</td>
<td>• Use the adult guardianship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Collect accident</td>
<td>(2) Disseminate and improve labelling based on</td>
<td>program to protect the rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information and prevent</td>
<td>goods/services</td>
<td>of the elderly and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occurrence/aggravation</td>
<td>• Improve and apply labelling rules for</td>
<td>handicapped people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>things such as household goods, housing,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cosmetic medicine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Conduct accident</td>
<td>(3) Provide appropriate information through</td>
<td>(2) Optimize transactions based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>investigations and</td>
<td>food labelling and strictly apply relevant laws</td>
<td>on goods/services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prevent recurrence</td>
<td>and regulations</td>
<td>• Revise the Telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unify food labelling steadily</td>
<td>Business Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote understanding of newly</td>
<td>• Consider revising the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enforced labelling system for functions of</td>
<td>Installment Sales Act</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>foods and conduct further review</td>
<td>• Conduct strict measures to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Ensure food safety</td>
<td>(4) Prevent and crack down on crimes</td>
<td>prevent detriment of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Properly operate</td>
<td>(5) Optimize standards and measuring</td>
<td>commodity futures</td>
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<tr>
<td>manufacturing process</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage notifications of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management and expand</td>
<td></td>
<td>housing for the elderly and</td>
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<tr>
<td>initiatives</td>
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<td>consider advance payment</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Aim to create a</td>
<td>5. Establish a framework for consumer</td>
<td>6. Improve the system for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a society where</td>
<td>redress for damage and profit</td>
<td>consumer policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>consumers play a key role</td>
<td>protection</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>in making choices and</td>
<td>(1) Promote redress for damage, complaint</td>
<td>(1) Enhance and strengthen the</td>
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<tr>
<td>taking actions</td>
<td>handling, and conflict resolution</td>
<td>organizational structure of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Consider supporting Qualified Consumer</td>
<td>government</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations financially and other</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>means</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consider building a system to deprive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>illicit proceeds and redress victims</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Encourage the use of the alternative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dispute resolution (ADR) based on goods/services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Promote consumer</td>
<td>(2) Address progress in advanced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>information and telecommunications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer systematic</td>
<td>society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consumer education</td>
<td>• Review the system to protect personal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>based on life stages</td>
<td>data</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider revising the</td>
<td>(3) Respond to globalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching guidelines</td>
<td>• Enhance the consultation system for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support establishing</td>
<td>cross-border transaction problems</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>regional committees</td>
<td>• Strengthen consultation services for</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>foreign consumers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*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
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.
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

**Consumer**

- Individual

  Except in cases when an individual becomes a party to a contract as a business operator or for the business purposes

**Business Operator**

- Corporation or association
- Individual business operator

In cases where an individual becomes a party to a contract as a business operator or for the purpose of a business operator

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rescission of contracts concluded because of unjust solicitation</th>
<th>Nullity of contract clauses that impair the interests of consumers</th>
<th>Efforts of business operators and consumers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The business operator made a misrepresentation regarding an important matter to the consumer.</td>
<td>Clauses that totally exempt the business operator from liability for damages are void.</td>
<td>Business operators shall endeavor to provide the necessary information about the contract properly, and consumers shall endeavor to actively use the information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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.
Aiming to create a consumer civil society

Systematic Map for Consumer Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Each Stage</th>
<th>Infancy</th>
<th>Primary School</th>
<th>Junior High</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Adulthood</th>
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<td><strong>Aims of the Stages</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>At this stage, you have just been introduced to the world of consumerism and are discovering your relationship with it.</td>
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<td>At this stage, you are expected to develop an understanding of your rights and responsibilities as a consumer and learn how to solve your problems.</td>
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<td>At this stage, you understand the impact of your actions on the environment and are expected to make your decisions.</td>
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<td>At this stage, you are expected to lead a more sustainable life, make changes in your consumption habits, and make changes in your consumer behavior.</td>
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<td><strong>Creating &amp; Consuming Goods</strong></td>
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<td>Understand the importance of buying activity</td>
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<td>Treasure your belongings</td>
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<td>Treasure the quality of your goods and services</td>
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<td>Treasure your relationships with other consumers</td>
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<td>Treasure the impact on the environment and society</td>
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<td><strong>Life Management Ability</strong></td>
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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 road map 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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recent meetings of the Ministerial Council on Prices</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 28, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 14, 2014</td>
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<td>May 15, 2015</td>
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<td>June 26, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 20, 2016</td>
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<td>June 26, 2018</td>
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* 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.
From collection of accident information to issuance of alerts

**Occurrence of Accidents Affecting the Life and/or Health of Consumers**

**Consultation/Notification Regarding Accident Information**

- **Relevant Ministries and Agencies/Local Governments**
  - Consumer Consultation Center
    - [National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan]
    - [Consumer Affairs Centers]
  - Notification Based on the Consumer Safety Act
  - Notification of Consumer Accidents
  - PIO-NET Information
    - [Practical Living Information Online Network System]

- **Business Operators**
  - Report Based on the Consumer Product Safety Act
  - Report of Serious Product Accidents
    - (Consumer Products*)
  - Provision of Accident Information

- **Institutions Participating in the Consumer Accident Information Databank**
  - [Relevant Ministries and Agencies/Independent Administrative Agencies]
  - Voluntary Provision of Information Not Based on Specific Laws
  - Provision of Accident Information

- **Institutions Participating in the Medical Institution Network**

**Notification/Report of Accident Information**

**Consumer Affairs Agency (Collecting accident information in a centralized way)**

- **Alerts**
  - Ministries and Agencies
    - Administrative Disposition/Instructions
  - Request for Measures

- **Consumers**
- **Business Operators**

**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.

*The term "consumer products" is defined as the products mainly supplied for consumers lives (except the products (foods, medical products, and automobiles) that are subject to the specific safety regulations set forth in other laws).
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 create 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/
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

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.
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 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**

**Trigger 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
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.
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.

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

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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>These types of labeling are prohibited:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leading to misunderstanding that the goods/services are superior to what they actually are</td>
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</table>

[Example] A flyer claims “Natural diamonds are used,” but what are actually used are all synthetic diamonds.

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

[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.

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.

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/
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
Nutritional function labeling
- Claiming the functions of specific nutrients

Foods with Function Claims
- Claiming the possibility that improvements of specific health are achieved under the responsibility of the manufacturer

Foods for Special Dietary Uses
Claims about appropriateness for special dietary use
- Claiming the possibility that the foods approved by the Commissioner of the Consumer Affairs Agency contribute to improvements of specific health
  - Foods for Patients
  - Powdered Formulas for Pregnant or Lactating Women
  - Infant Formulas
  - Foods for People with Dysphagia

Foods in General
Any foods labeled as nutritional supplement, health supplement, or nutrient controlling food fall under Foods in General

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

Basic Survey on Consumer Life
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Operators</th>
<th>Promotional Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Declaration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visualization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Voluntary declaration/announcement of initiatives by each business operator (philosophy, policy, specific achievements, plans)</td>
<td>- Releasing the details about the announced initiatives to consumers and society (promotional organization’s websites)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Implementing such initiatives as declared or announced</td>
<td>- Awareness-raising activities through symposia and seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Announcing the outcomes gained from and the details about the implemented initiatives (follow-up)</td>
<td>- Awarding prizes for excellent cases (award for good practices of consumer-oriented management)</td>
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