

Japan Traffic Accidents in 2006

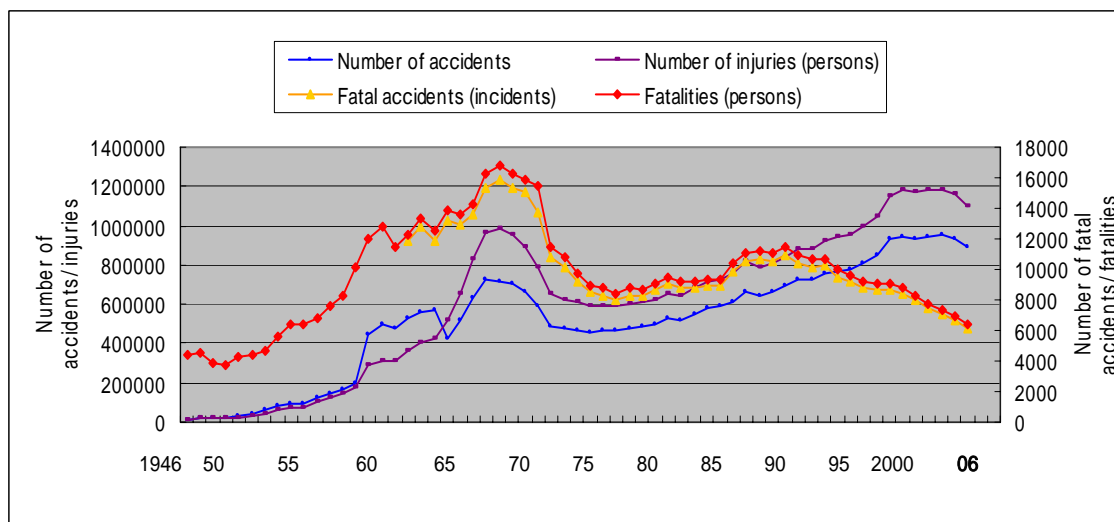
(Statistics based on data published by National Police Agency Traffic Bureau, January 25, 2007)

1. Occurrence of Traffic Accidents

During 2006, the number of traffic accident related fatalities was 6,352 persons – the sixth consecutive year of decline and a fall to below 6,500 persons for the first time in 51 years (since 1955). Decreases were also recorded in the numbers of traffic accidents and the persons injured in those mishaps, both of which climbed to all-time highs in 2004, for the second year in a row. On a less positive note, the number of persons injured in accidents was above one million for the eighth consecutive year, indicating that the conditions on Japan's roads continue to be the source of keen concern.

- Number of traffic accidents: 886,864 (down 46,964 accidents, or 5.0% from the previous year)
 - The number of accidents declined to the levels recorded in 1999~2000 (the record annual high for accidents was the 952,191 in 2004).
- Number of fatal accidents: 6,147 (down 478 accidents, or 7.2% from the previous year)
- Number of injuries: 1,098,199 persons (down 58,434 persons, or 5.1% from the previous year)

Historical Trends in Traffic Accidents (1946-2006)



<Major Benchmarks>

Year	*Topics	Number of accident fatalities (persons)	Vehicle ownership (10,000 units)	Number of licensed drivers (10,000 persons)	Automobile driving distances (100 million km)
1955		6,379	134 (Excluding mopeds)		
1960		12,055	290 (Excluding mopeds)		
1965		12,484	1966: 1,801	2,286	1,047
1970	* Record-high fatalities	16,765	2,839	2,654	2,260
1975		10,792	3,859	3,348	2,863
1980		8,706	5,225	4,300	3,891
1985		9,261	6,704	5,235	4,284
1990		11,227	7,811	6,091	6,286
1995		10,679	8,497	6,856	7,203
2000		9,066	8,925	7,469	7,757
2001		8,747	8,972	7,555	7,908
2002	*Deaths fall to half of record high	8,362	9,011	7,653	7,908
2003	*Prime Minister Koizumi announces new benchmarks	7,702	9,031	7,747	7,934
2004		7,358	9,046	7,825	7,817
2005		6,871	9,138	7,880	7,689
2006		6,352		7,933	
2010	*Targets for 8 th 5-year plan	5,500	*Less than one million deaths and injuries		
2012	*Government targets	5,000			

2. Reasons for Declining Fatalities in Recent Years

The basic view is that behind increases in the numbers of accidents and persons injured in those mishaps lies the growth in automobile unit ownership, the number of licensed drivers, the distances that automobiles are driven and other expansion in traffic volume.

On the other hand, examining the trend in fatalities over the past 10 years, there has been a consistent decline (with the exception of 2000). The major reasons viewed as supporting this decrease include “Improved seatbelt use rates,” “Lower vehicle speed just prior to accidents,” “Decline in highly malicious or reckless driving accidents” and “Pedestrian observance of laws.”

<1996 vs. 2006>

- Improved seatbelt use rate - - - 74.6% → 89.1%
- Fatality rate is approx. 10 times higher when not wearing seatbelts

- Lower vehicle speed just prior to accidents - - - Decrease in accidents occurring at speeds of over 80km/h to one-third.
 - Fatal accident rate when traveling over 80km/h is 22.4%.
 - Fatal accident rate is 36.6 times higher when traveling over 80km/h.

- Decline in highly malicious or reckless driving accidents - - - Changes in share of all fatality or injury accidents
 - Driving intoxicated - - - Decline from 7.4 times overall fatal accident rate to 0.46 times.
 - Speed limit violations - - - Decline from 17.7 times overall fatal accident rate to 0.42 times.

- Pedestrian observance of laws and rules - - - Violation rate of pedestrians killed or injured in accidents declined from 57.4% to 41.3%.
 - Fatality rate when pedestrians in violation = 4.6%.
 - Fatality rate when pedestrians not in violation = 1.5%.

3. Intoxicated Driving Fatal Accidents Decline to Less Than Half the Total 10 Years Ago

- In 2006, the number of fatal accidents occurring as a result of intoxicated driving (involving vehicles of moped scale or above, first party to accident) was 611 accidents, a broad decline of 96 accidents (13.6%) compared to 2005.

- Traffic accidents while driving intoxicated have been in a decline trend of late, due in some part to the strengthened penalties for such actions contained in the revised version of the *Road Traffic Law* enacted in June 2002. There was a temporary reversal in this tendency in the first half of 2006, however, with an increase of 13 accidents over the first half of the previous year. However, thanks to a strengthened crackdown on intoxicated driving from last September, the heightened social mood aimed at stamping out drunk driving and other developments, there was a marked downturn in such incidents from the second half. As a result, the number of fatal accidents linked to intoxicated driving for all of 2006 finished at less than half the total of 10 years ago.

4. Number of Fatalities by Age vs. Previous Year (total for all age groups = 6,352 persons, down 7.6%)

- Age 15 and under -13.2%
- Age 16~19 -13.1%
- Age 20~29 -18.0 %
- Age 30~39 -14.9%
- Age 65 + -3.9%
- Age 70 + -2.8%
- Age 75 + -1.6%

- Trends over past decade - - - absolute number of fatalities by age
 - Sharp decrease in young people (age 16~24) to approx. one third of previous level.
 - General leveling off for senior citizens (age 65+). Countermeasures for the elderly ranks as a key theme
- Increase in senior citizen accident share to 44.2% (vs. 42.6% the previous year; compared to 20.1% elderly share of population)
<Senior citizen (age 65+) accident fatalities by status>
 - Driving/riding in automobile
37.1% (39.6% previous year, decline of 2.5%)
 - Operating/riding motorcycle
17.6% (17.2% previous year, gain of 0.4%)
 - Riding bicycle
12.8% (12.3% previous year, gain of 0.5%)
 - Walking
32.3% (30.6% previous year, gain of 1.7%)

5. Number of Fatalities by Accident Status

- Driving/riding in automobile - 13.1% (down 6.7% from previous year)
- Operating/riding motorcycle - 5.5% (down 9.8% from previous year)
- Riding bicycle - 4.0% (down 1.5% from previous year)
- Walking - 2.5% (down 6.5% from previous year)
- Trends over past decade - decline trend for all accident conditions (0.64 times overall)
 - Driving/riding automobile = 0.55 times
 - Operating/driving motorcycle = 0.63 times

6. Accident Reduction Proposals Contained in FY2007 Road Traffic Law Revision

- Harsher intoxicated driving penalties - - - Stricter action against passengers, vehicle, alcohol supply, hit-and-run, etc.
- Strengthened senior citizen measures - - - Introduction of cognitive skills test for drivers age 75+ when renewing licenses, etc.
- More effective bicycle and pedestrian measures - - - Expanded bicycle access on sidewalks, promote wearing of helmets by small children and infants, etc.
- Promotion of injury reduction measures - - - Mandatory rear seat seatbelt use on expressways, etc.
- Continued promotion of parking lot solutions, etc.
- Expand target of safe driving supervisor system to businesses, etc. - - - Also targeting motorcycle delivery services.