1. General

1.1. Overview

Japan is a long, narrow island nation traversed in the center by steep mountains. Since ancient times, the country’s inhabitants and their activities have been concentrated in the coastal areas, with harbors forming the core.

At present, Japan relies on marine transport to move the majority of the goods essential for its inhabitants’ daily lives. About 99.7% of all goods involved in foreign trade pass through Japan’s ports and harbors; marine transport accounts for 38.7% of all domestic cargo distribution on a ton/kilo basis.

Ports and harbors serve as focal points for the industrial activities that support regional economies. They also function as marine recreation sites, as well as processing areas for sewage and other waste products.

Japan’s ports and harbors, therefore, play an essential role in the social and economic activities of its citizens.

Dependence on Overseas Sources for Raw Materials

![Percentage of major products imported](chart.png)

Source:
*“Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry: Table of Energy Balance, 2003”*
*“Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry: Annual Authentic Information for Natural Resources and Energy, 2003.5.17”*
*“Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: Table of Supply and Demand for Foodstuff, 2003”*
*“Japan Tariff Association: Japan Exports and Imports, December 2003”*

Note:
Percentage of imports = import volume/(import volume + domestic production volume)
Part 1

Comparison of Domestic Freight Shares by Transport Mode

- Comparison of Domestic Freight Shares by Transport Mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Roads</th>
<th>Pipelines</th>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Ships</th>
<th>Railroads</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>29.7%</td>
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Source: Information and Research Department, Policy Bureau, MLIT: Overseas Transport Statistics 2004
Note: Figures for Japan represent 2003 levels; figures for America represent 2000 levels; figures for Great Britain and France represent 2001 levels; figures for Germany represent 2002 levels.

Container cargo handling (Port of Yokohama)