

Chapter 7. Correspondence to Society of Fewer Children and Increasing People of Advanced Age

[Making transportation and public space barrier free]

Making public means of transportation barrier free is being promoted on the basis of the Transportation Accessibility Improvement Law that came into force in November 2000. We draw up guidelines concerning passenger facilities, cars, etc. and support public transportation operators in various ways. In addition, we promote making walking space barrier free by leveling sidewalks and developing overhead crossings with elevators. We also promote making river and port space barrier free.

103. (Target for barrier-free conditions contained in the basic policy based on the Transportation Accessibility Improvement Law)

○Passenger facilities

Concerning railway stations, bus terminals, passenger ship terminals and air terminals where the average number of passengers per day is over 5,000, the following barrier-free conditions are to be put into practice by 2010: (1) eliminating differences of level, (2) installing blocks for guidance of the visually-handicapped, and (3) providing toilets for the physically handicapped.

○Facilities for general traffic

Barrier-free conditions are to be put into practice by 2010 in principle, with roads, station squares, passageways comprising main specific routes in selectively developed areas

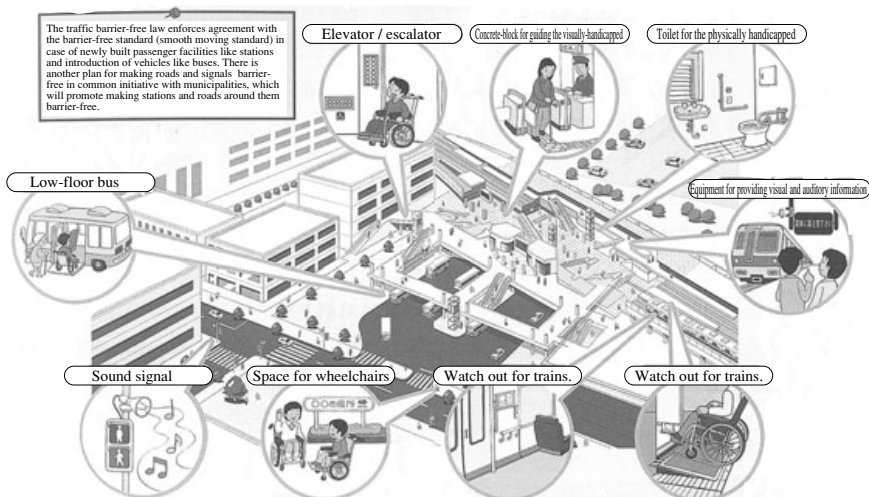
○Barrier-free conditions such as installing signals such as sound signals and response signals for the elderly, installation of road traffic signs for roads for pedestrians and road indicators for crosswalks are to be put into practice on all the roads comprising specific routes by 2010 in principle.

○Vehicles

The following barrier-free conditions are to be achieved by 2010.

Kind of vehicle	Total number	Number of vehicles made barrier-free
Railway cars	Approx. 51,000	Approx. 15,000 (approx. 30%)
Buses	Approx. 60,000	To be altered to lower floor cars in 10~15years in principle ----- (Non-step buses) Approx. 12,000~15,000 (20%~25%)
Passenger ships	Approx. 1,100	Approx. 550 (approx. 50%)
Airplanes	Approx. 420	Approx 180 (approx. 40%)

104. (Effect of Transportation Accessibility Improvement Law)



Furthermore, MLIT is promoting making barrier-free buildings that are open to the public, such as theaters and department stores through guidance devices by the “Heartful Building Law”, etc. In addition, MLIT is working on community development to deal with the aging society, such as promoting barrier-free conditions in buildings and the transport system as a whole, and practicing disaster prevention measures concentratively on sites with facilities related to those most likely to be affected by disaster.

105. (Approved buildings on basis of “Heartful Building Law”)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Approved buildings (fiscal year)	11	120	229	320	382	366	332
Approved buildings (cumulative)	11	131	360	680	1,062	1,428	1,760

Data : Research result of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

[Environment improvement with the idea of introducing universal design]

The idea of universal design is being introduced concerning the maintenance of road space and city parks. Also MLIT is providing guidance information easy to understand for everyone, including foreigners and others.

[Development of housing corresponding to declining birth rates and aging of society]

Making owner-occupied houses barrier-free is encouraged through accommodation of funds.



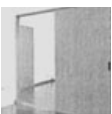

As for rental houses, in addition to providing barrier-free public rental houses, a new law has been enacted, promoting: (1) development of good-quality rental house for the elderly by private enterprises, and (2)smooth move-in of the elderly by guaranteeing debts of unpaid house rent.

106. (Good rental housing for elderly people)

Good-quality rental housing for the elderly

The eighth house-building five-year plan: 110,000 houses (budget assigned is for 16,000 in 2001)
 Promoting provision of rental housing for single / couple elderly people by private sector and use of not only newly-built housing but also existing housing after renovation

Houses corresponding to physical condition of people of advanced age

Installing handrails	wide hallways	Eliminating differentials of grade	Service in case of emergencies
			

In order to support child-rearing families MLIT is promoting: (1)development of housing complexes composed of public rental houses, houses in the urban renewal projects and nursery schools and (2)providing good-quality rental houses for families through loans and public rental houses.

[Measures for barrier-free in winter]

In snowy districts, snow and ice-control measures on roads and using heat of sewage-recycled water are practiced in areas with a large number of pedestrians such as central urban areas, etc. In Hokkaido, each project is developed fully as part of the “Fuyu-Topia Project”, and MLIT is trying to secure safe and comfortable sidewalks for pedestrians, including the elderly, in winter.