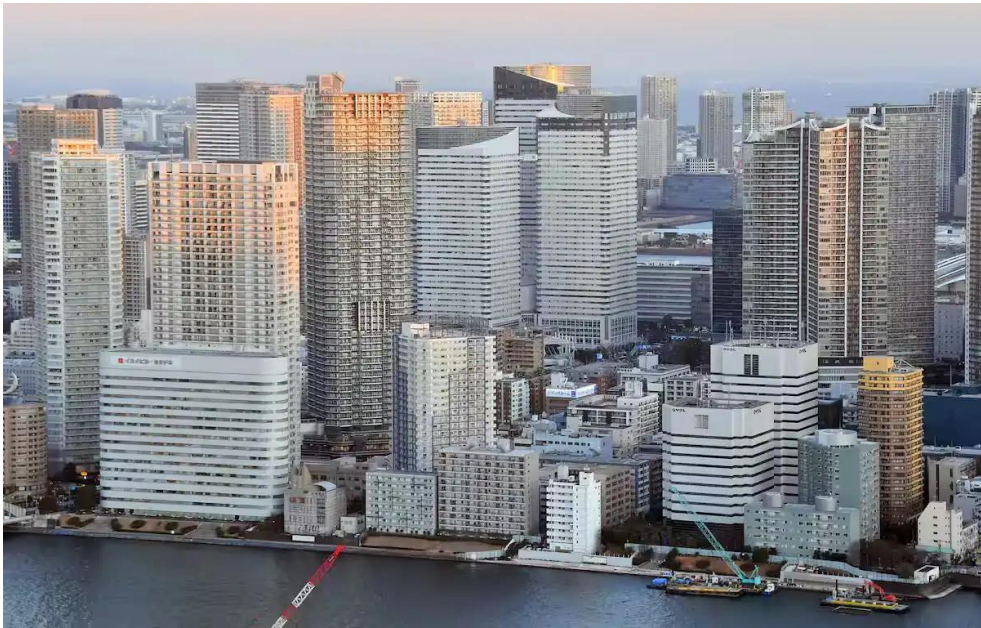


# Japan Must Take Responsibility for Earthquake Disaster Mitigation

首都直下地震への備えは、日本全体に関わる大きな課題の一つです。災害はいつ起こるか分からないからこそ、私たち一人ひとりの備えだけでなく、国や自治体がどのような対策を進めるかも重要になります。安心して暮らせる社会を築くために、国にはどのような役割や責任が求められるのでしょうか。また、私たち自身には何ができると思いますか。



## 1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

The government has approved a revised emergency preparedness plan for a major earthquake directly beneath the capital. Efforts to achieve the new disaster [mitigation](#) targets must now be accelerated.

A metropolitan earthquake is [projected](#) to cause up to approximately 18,000 deaths and destroy or burn some 400,000 buildings. The revised plan sets a target of reducing both figures by more than half over the next decade.

The previous plan had aimed for a roughly 50% reduction over ten years, but actual results fell short at only a 20–30% decrease, largely because building earthquake-proofing and fire-prevention measures had not advanced sufficiently.

With a metropolitan earthquake forecast at around 70% probability within the next 30 years, further delays in mitigation are unacceptable.

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Source: Japan Must Take Responsibility for Earthquake Disaster Mitigation

# 1. Article

Drawing on lessons from past shortcomings, the government has substantially increased the number of numerical targets and established a new **framework** for annual review of progress and challenges.

The disaster management agency scheduled to be established later this year will be expected to **implement** the new plan rigorously. It will be granted the **authority** to issue recommendations to individual ministries and strong directives to those falling behind.

Roughly 70% of projected deaths and building damage would result from fire. The Great Hanshin and Great East Japan earthquakes both saw numerous fires caused by electrical systems.

The plan accordingly emphasizes wider installation of seismic breakers—devices that cut power when strong tremors are detected, preventing fires caused by toppled appliances and facilitating restoration of electricity after outages.

The installation rate stood at 20% in fiscal 2024, but the plan calls for raising it to near-universal coverage. Seismic breakers come in various types at various price points and are available at home improvement stores.

To accelerate uptake, the government should expand purchase subsidies, particularly in high fire-risk areas, and retailers should work to raise awareness by expanding shelf space for these products.

Also worth noting is a new provision that commits the government to actively countering disaster-related misinformation on social media—a growing problem that warrants close attention.

The concentration of people, businesses, and government functions in the Tokyo metropolitan area means that damage there would have sweeping effects on the national economy.

## 2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

### 1. mitigation 軽減

Early planning preparation can help with risk mitigation.

### 2. projected 予測された

The projected costs of the party were higher than expected.

### 3. framework 枠組み

The urban planning team created a clear framework for future housing projects.

### 4. implement 実施する

The hospital will implement the new policy next month.

### 5. authority 権限

Only the department manager has the authority to approve requests for new equipment.

## 3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is the new target for reducing deaths and building losses? Why did the old plan fall short of its goals?
2. Why does the government want to fight misinformation on social media?
3. Why could a major Tokyo earthquake affect the national economy?
4. Do you think governments should spend more money on disaster prevention? Why or why not?
5. How can social media be used responsibly during a natural disaster?

## 4. 首都直下地震 国は減災の実現に責任を

政府は首都直下地震に備える緊急対策推進基本計画の改定を閣議決定した。新たな減災目標の達成に向け対策を加速させなくてはならない。

首都直下地震は最大で死者約1万8千人、全壊・焼失建物は約40万棟の甚大な被害が想定されている。これを今後10年間でいずれも半数以下に減らす目標を明記した。

従来の基本計画は10年間でおおむね半減を目指したが、実際は2~3割の減少にとどまった。建物の耐震化や防火対策が十分に進まなかったためだ。

首都直下地震は今後30年以内に70%程度の高い確率で発生が予測されており、これ以上の減災の遅れは許されない。

国はこれまでの反省から対策の数値目標を大幅に増やしたほか、進捗（しんちよく）状況や課題を毎年確認する新たな体制を敷く。対策の実効性を高め、確実に目標を達成できるよう責任をもって取り組んでもらいたい。

年内の設置が予定される防災庁は新計画の確実な実行が求められる。各省庁に対し改善を求める勧告権が与えられ、対策が遅れている省庁には強い指示が可能になる。防災の司令塔として真価が問われよう。

想定する死者と建物被害の約7割は火災が原因だ。阪神大震災や東日本大震災では電気系統に起因する火災が多発した。そこで強い揺れを感知すると電気を遮断し、電気器具の転倒や停電復旧時の出火を防ぐ感震ブレーカーの普及に力を入れる。

令和6年度の設置率は20%だが、おおむね設置の水準まで引き上げるとした。機能や価格はさまざまなタイプがあり、ホームセンターなどで購入できる。自分の命は自ら守る意識をしっかりと持ち、各家庭で早期の設置を考えたい。

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[Japan Forward](#)

## 4. 首都直下地震 国は減災の実現に責任を

国は普及を急ぐため、延焼の危険性が高い地域などで購入費の補助を拡充すべきである。販売店は売り場の拡大など認知度向上に取り組んでほしい。

SNSを使った災害時のデマが問題化していることを受け、デマを打ち消す情報を国が発信すると新たに盛り込んだことは評価できる。十分に目配りをしてもらいたい。

人口や多くの企業、行政機能が集中する首都圏での被害は、全国の社会経済に大きな影響が及ぶ。東京への一極集中の是正も真剣に検討すべきである。