Record of Heavy Rains of July 2020

Disaster Record 4

Resident Evacuation

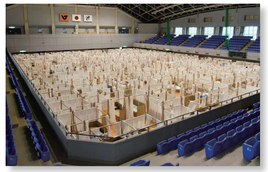
Throughout the region, disaster prevention government radio broadcasts were sent out and fire brigades and neighborhood associations went on patrols and went door-to-door to urge people to evacuate. Some of these efforts were hindered by the sound of the rain and the fact that evacuation advisories were issued late at night.

In the prefecture, a total of 2,512 people took refuge in up to 212 municipal evacuation shelters (including welfare evacuation shelters and lodging facilities converted into shelters) as of 10:30 AM on July 12, 2020.

Evacuation shelter in Hitoyoshi
(Kumamoto Disaster Digital Archives/Provided by: Hitoyoshi City)

Shelter Conditions

Municipalities implemented measures to avoid the three Cs (closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings) in evacuation shelters based on the Guidelines for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Evacuation Shelters issued by the prefecture in May 2020.



Partitions in an evacuation shelter in Hitoyoshi City
(Kumamoto Disaster Digital Archives/Provided by: Hitoyoshi City)

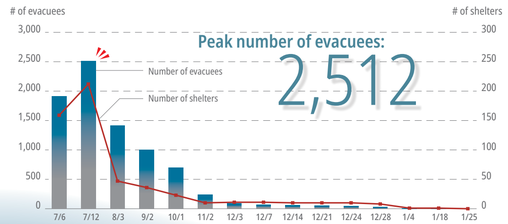
Distributing food in Konose district of Kuma Village
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Non-Shelter Evacuees

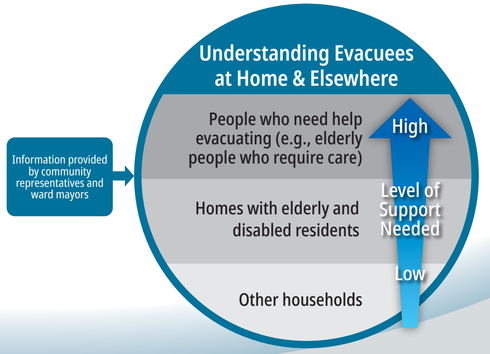
The wide-scale heavy rains in July 2020 occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in many people evacuating to places other than evacuation shelters. Even under such circumstances, the prefecture was able to get a good idea about people evacuating to non-shelters through door-to-door visits by public health offices and municipal health centers, and through safety checks by the Japan Care Manager Association.

Victims with Special Needs

After July 3rd, welfare evacuation shelters were opened in 12 municipalities, with a peak total of 50 people evacuated to 21 facilities (July 12). The prefecture responded to inquiries from disaster-stricken municipalities about opening and running welfare evacuation shelters and, in collaboration with the Prefectural Disability Consultation Support Project Liaison Council, offered private visits with consultation support specialists.



Change over time in numbers of evacuees and shelters in Kumamoto Prefecture



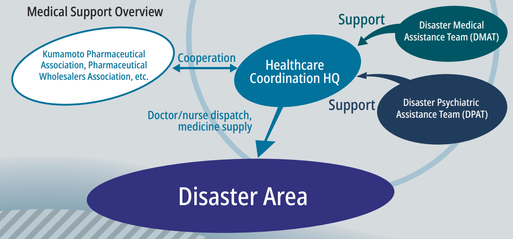
Initial Response

In the prefecture, a disaster response headquarters at the same time as the heavy rain special warning was issued to Yatsushiro and Hitoyoshi City at 4:50 am on July 4, and approximately 100 people joined the initial response. Immediately following the start of flooding, the prefecture requested dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces and the Emergency Fire Response Team. Kumamoto Prefecture also worked together with the national government, local municipalities, and related organizations to respond to the disaster.

Medical Aid

A Health and Medical Coordination HQ was set up to provide medical support to medical institutions and assist in transporting patients with cooperation from DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Team) and DPAT (Disaster Psychiatric Assistance Team) teams, the Pharmaceutical Association, and the Nursing Association.

Medical Support Overview



Relief & Rescue Operations

Due to the extensive damage throughout the prefecture, agencies such as the police, fire department, Self-Defense Forces, Emergency Fire Response Teams, and the Coast Guard diligently carried out search and rescue operations, resulting in a total of 2,048 people rescued.

Total number of people rescued and saved:

2,048

Overview of Rescue & Relief Personnel

Organization	# of ppl
Fire Dept (within prefecture)	47
Fire Dept (Emergency Fire Response Team - Land)	218
Fire Dept (Emergency Fire Response Team - Air)	149
Police	351
Ground Self-Defense Force	1,097
Maritime Self-Defense Force	1
Air Self-Defense Force	164
Japan Coast Guard	21

Search efforts in Kuma Village

Rescue efforts in Hitoyoshi City
(Kumamoto Disaster Digital Archives/
Provided by: Hitoyoshi Shimo-kuma FD HQ)

Support for Disaster Victims

Due to the "risk of harm to body and life for many people," the prefecture designated 26 municipalities (9 cities, 12 towns, 5 villages) for coverage under the Disaster Relief Act on July 4 and July 14. Evacuation shelters and temporary housing were opened, supplies were distributed, and disaster waste was disposed of.

Distributing Supplies

The prefecture started issuing stockpiled supplies (food, water, blankets, etc.) on July 5 in accordance with municipal requests. This was followed, in accordance with municipal requests, by provision of supplies provided by companies with disaster agreements with the prefecture and companies that offered support.

Prefectural staff carrying supplies to an evacuation shelter in Hitoyoshi City
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Disposal of Disaster Waste

Over 9,000 buildings in 33 municipalities in Kumamoto Prefecture suffered flood damage, resulting in 370,000 tons of disaster waste generated from flooding and demolition of damaged houses. Traffic congestion at a temporary storage site in Hitoyoshi City also hindered waste disposal. A fast lane for disposal of sorted single items was created and was successful in alleviating congestion.

Landscaper collecting debris on side of road in Sakamoto, Yatsushiro
(Provided by: Kumamoto Nichinichi Shimbun)

Private Groups & Volunteers

The Kumamoto Prefecture Disaster Volunteer Center was established on July 6 with municipal disaster volunteer centers opening thereafter (13 in total). Volunteers mainly helped by cleaning up damaged homes and removing mud and sand.

Total number of volunteers:

36,146

Set Up & Use of Municipal Disaster Volunteer Centers

Municipality	Operating Period	# volunteers
Yatsushiro	7/7-	7,594
Hitoyoshi	7/10-	13,775
Arao	7/10-8/8	722
Amakusa	7/22-9/25	638
Oguni	7/13-8/18	90
Ashikita	7/6-10/4	7,132
Tsunagi	7/6-10/4	204
Nishiki	7/9-7/22	68
Asagiri	7/7-7/19	254
Taragi	7/9-7/31	56
Sagara	7/8-8/20	1,147
Yamae	7/10-7/24	148
Kuma	7/10-	4,318

(as of end of October 2020)