



This mail service is intended to provide the latest information concerning building regulations and our activities with domestic and overseas organizations which are engaged in technical assessments and research in the building field.

If you no longer wish to receive this mail, please contact us at the following address:

kokusai@bcj.or.jp

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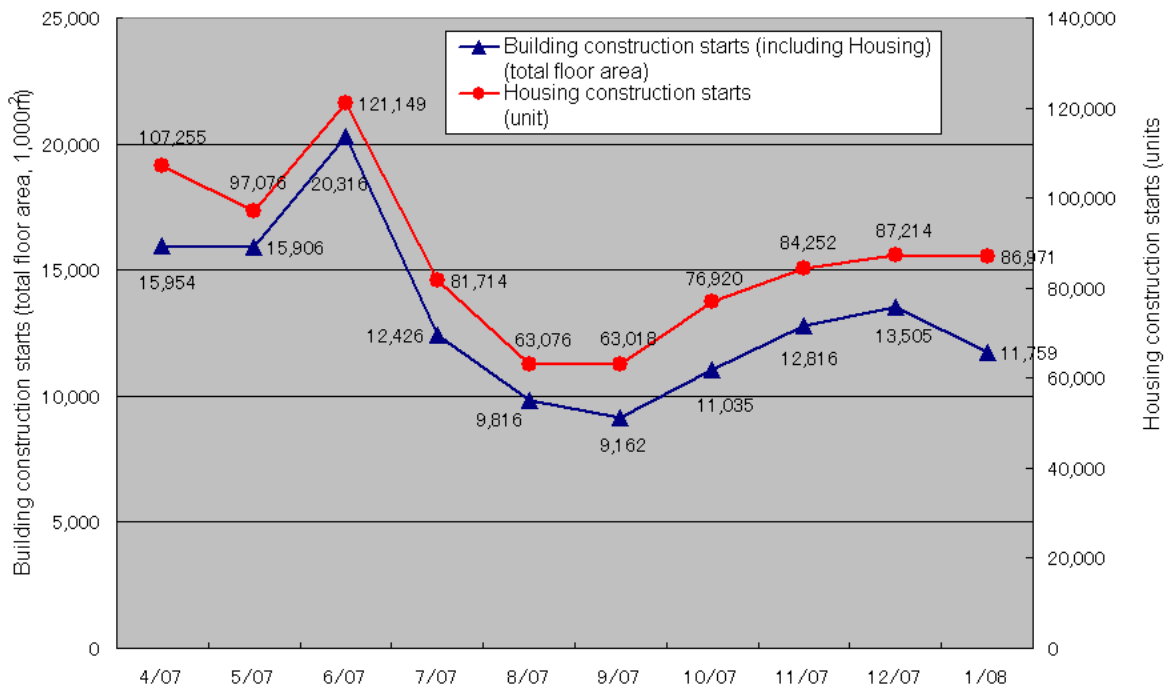
§2. Recent Activities of BCJ

§3. Results of Survey on BCJ Web News

§1. Recent Building-Related Developments in Japan

a) Measures to Facilitate Building Confirmation Procedures

As mentioned in *BCJ Web News* No. 7 and No. 8, the amended Building Standard Law, which ensures building confirmation and inspection procedures took effect on June 20, 2007. These changes reflect lessons learned as a result of incidents involving the falsification of anti-seismic performance data. The amended law has brought about major changes in building confirmation procedures, including the introduction of a structural calculation review system, the establishment of a guideline for confirmation and inspection, and the implementation of confirmation and inspection based on the guideline.



Building Construction Starts and Housing Construction Starts in Japan (April, 2007- January, 2008)

From July to September, there was a dramatic decline in building construction starts and housing construction starts because of delays in submitting applications and an increase in the time required for building confirmation procedures. This was attributed in part to the fact that designers and inspectors were unfamiliar with the new system.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) has taken various steps to facilitate building confirmation procedures. It has established inquiry desks to respond to questions from designers and inspectors, and seminars are held throughout Japan to explain changes in the Law. The Ministry has also made and distributed a brochure explaining the new building confirmation procedures in plain language to ensure that they can be understood by everyone concerned. As a result of these initiatives, designers and inspectors now have a better understanding of the new system, and the number of building and housing construction starts has started to rise.

b) Fraudulent Testing Discovered

To ensure the safety of buildings against fire, the Building Standard Law defines technical criteria concerning fire-resistive and fire-preventive performance. Builders are required to use products that either meet specifications listed in Orders and Notifications, or those that have been approved by the Minister.

In October and November 2007, it was discovered that two companies had falsified performance tests relating to ministerial approval for structural methods and materials relating to fire-resistive and fire-preventive performance. Both companies obtained performance evaluation tests using specimens with different specifications from those stated in the applications for ministerial approval.

MLIT asked all parties that had obtained ministerial approval for structural methods relating to fire-resistive and fire-preventive performance to carry out voluntary checks to ensure that there was no falsification (from November 19-December 21). The Ministry also conducted a sample survey of products that have already received ministerial approval to check the actual performance characteristics of these products.

A total of 13,965 approved products were covered by the voluntary checking program. By January 24, a total of 98 questionable items had been discovered, including the implementation of performance evaluation tests using specimens different from those stipulated in approval application specifications, and the sale of products with specifications different from those stipulated in ministerial approvals. MLIT is holding individual meetings with the companies that reported questionable items and is requiring them to take appropriate action with regard to items that failed to meet performance requirements.

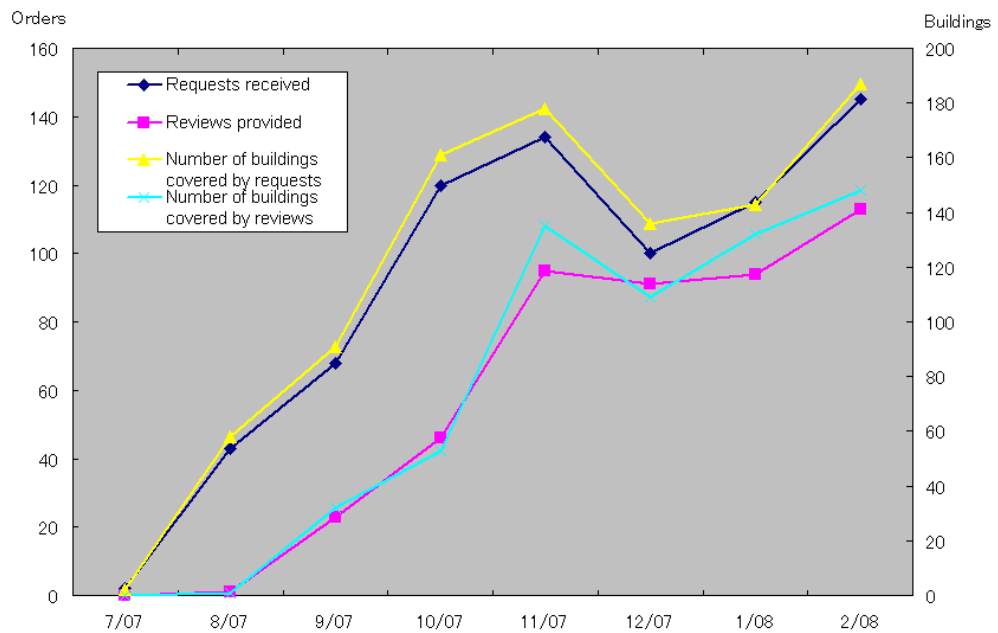
§2. Recent Activities of BCJ

a) Structural Calculation Review Work

① Progress in the First Half-Year

Eight months have passed since BCJ began to provide structural calculation review work in June 2007. By February 29, BCJ had been designated as a provider of this service by 31 prefectural governments. The number of requests received has risen steadily since the introduction of the service.

On the day of his visit, the Minister was briefed on BCJ's structural calculation review work by its President, Makoto Tateishi. He then observed activities in the Structural Safety Judgment Department.



Structural calculation review work provided by BCJ (July 2007 - February 2008)

② Visit to BCJ by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport and Tourism

The Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Mr. Tetsuzo Fuyushiba, is inspecting structural calculation review organizations established under the amended Building Standard Law. He visited the BCJ office on December 7, 2007. On the day of his visit, the Minister was briefed on BCJ's structural calculation review work by its President, Makoto Tateishi. He then observed activities in the Structural Safety Judgment Department.



The ministerial visit

b) BCJ Publications in English

① Publication Schedule for *Quick Look at Housing in Japan* (6th Edition)

Quick Look was first published in 1985 to promote international awareness of the housing situation and housing policies in Japan. It has since been updated five times to reflect policy changes and shifts in the housing situation. Since the publication of the 5th edition in 2003, there have been major changes in housing policy, including the establishment of the Urban Renaissance Agency and the Japan Housing Finance Agency, and the passage of the Basic Act for Housing. We therefore plan to publish a 6th edition in May of this year, with substantial revisions.

To increase accessibility of the new edition for housing specialists and researchers in Japan and overseas, we intend to distribute it as a download from the BCJ website.

② Publication Schedule for *The Building Standard Law of Japan 2008*

In June 2006, the Building Standard Law was substantially amended to ensure building safety, and in June 2007, numerous orders and notifications were amended or established to reflect these changes. BCJ is currently compiling *The Building Standard Law of Japan 2008*, which is an English translation of the Building Standard Law, the Enforcement Order, and key Notifications. We plan to publish the new version in electronic form by this summer.

c) Report on International Conferences

① WFTAO Annual Meeting

The World Federation of Technical Assessment Organizations (WFTAO) held its annual meeting from September 19 - 21, 2007. The meeting was hosted by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) and was held in Gold Coast, Australia. The WFTAO has 25 member-organizations in 22 countries. 13 organizations (including BCJ) from 11 countries attended the meeting. After participating in seminars on the first day of the meeting, the BCJ representatives attended plenary sessions on the second-and-third days and reported on the tightening of confirmation and inspection work in Japan and on recent trends in BCJ activities.

② ABCB Conference, Seminar on Performance Evaluation in Japan for Australian Industry Representatives

After the WFTAO meeting, BCJ representatives attended the ABCB Conference, which was also held in Gold Coast over a three-day period starting on September 24, 2007. On the eve of the conference, a seminar on performance evaluation systems under the Japanese Building Standard Law was held for representatives of Australian industries. This meeting also provided an opportunity to introduce BCJ's performance evaluation services. There

were questions on a number of topics, including evaluation applications from overseas, and application methods for approved performance evaluation organizations in Japan.

Executive Director
Toshikatsu Sasai
explains BCJ's
performance evaluations.



③ ICC Annual Conference

The 2007 annual conference of the International Code Council (ICC) was held in Reno, Nevada from September 30 - October 3. The Japan Conference of Building Officials (JCBO) sent a 14-member delegation, led by BCJ President Makoto Tateishi. During the International Forum, the Japanese delegation, which included three BCJ representatives, made a presentation about changes to the *Kenchikushi* Law. They also attended the opening session and various other programs, including an educational program on the U.S. equivalent of the *Kenchikushi* Law, which was specially arranged for the Japanese delegation.

d) JICA Counterpart Training Program for Indonesia

Among the technical cooperation projects currently being implemented by the Japanese government is 'The Project on Building Administration and Enforcement Capacity Development for Seismic Resilience' in Indonesia. The aim is to improve the anti-seismic system of buildings in that country. In mid-January 2008, three Indonesian trainees came to Japan for two weeks as part of this program. The trainees, who are involved in construction administration in Indonesia, came to Japan to learn about anti-seismic system, especially for houses, and to also learn about the method used to check anti-seismic systems under building approval systems. BCJ was commissioned by Japan International Cooperation Agency to prepare and administer the training program and to provide lectures on related topics, including a summary of the building confirmation and inspection system, and to check methods used during the building confirmation process.

§3. Results of Survey on BCJ Web News

We included a reader survey in the last edition of BCJ's mail magazine, *BCJ Web News*. The results indicate that the responded readers place a high value on construction-related information in English, and that our publication policy is supported by them.

Based on these results, we will continue to publish the *BCJ Web News* semi-annually (in February and August). As before, the main content will be construction-related news from Japan, and information about the activities of BCJ. Some readers want us to increase the frequency of publication. We plan to produce special editions of the *BCJ Web News* whenever there is news that needs to be distributed urgently.

We thank those who participated in the survey. Please forward any comments or suggestions to the International Section (kokusai@bcj.or.jp).

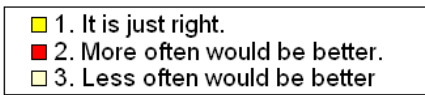
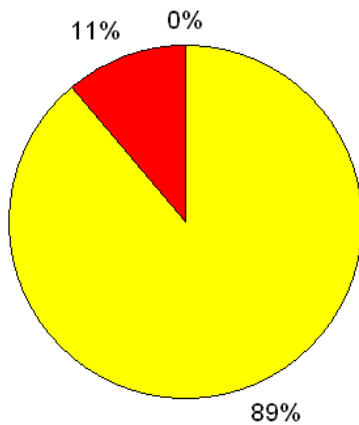
Survey Results

Survey period: August 29-September 10, 2007 (14 days)

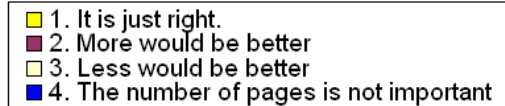
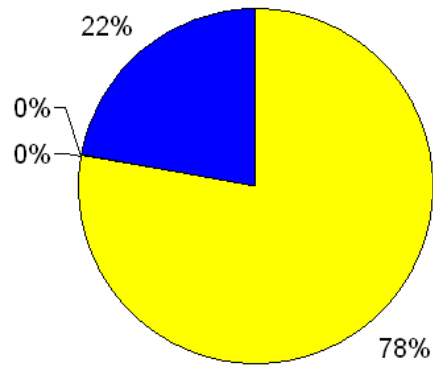
No. of Survey forms sent out: 278

No. of Responses received: 9

1. Frequency

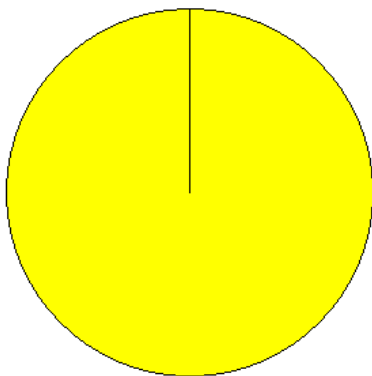


2. Volume



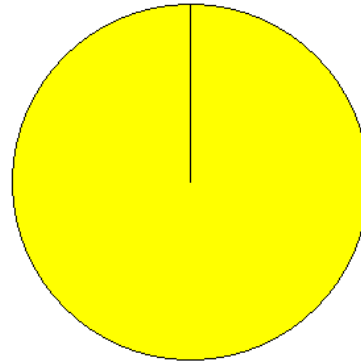
3. Contents

(1) News from the Japanese construction field



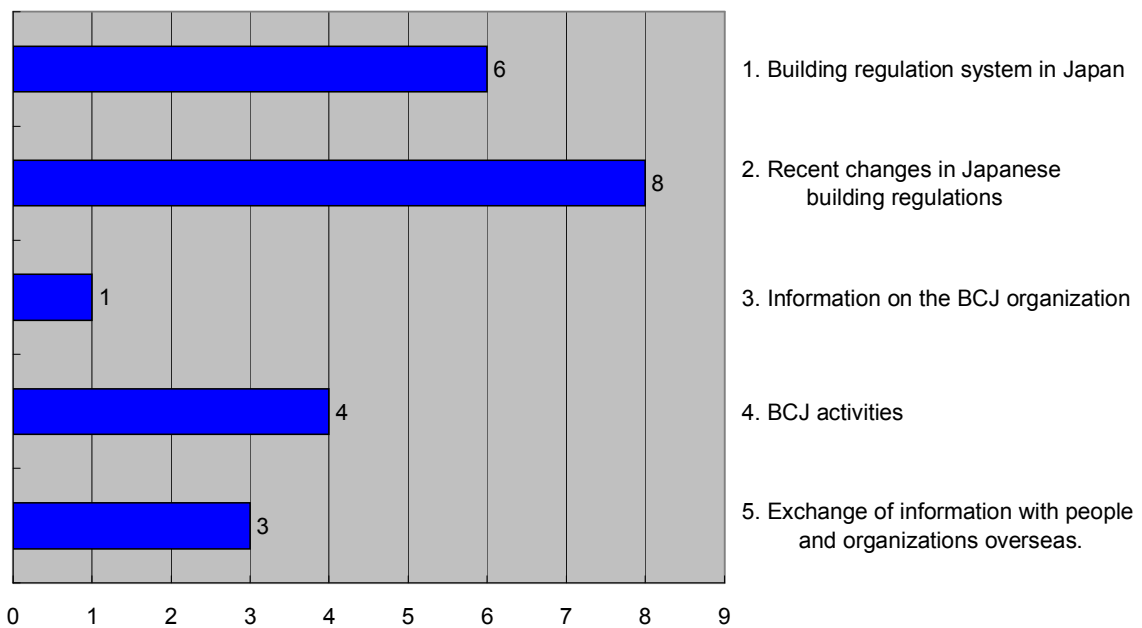
1. I'm interested in it.
2. I'm not interested in it.

(2) News about BCJ activities



1. I'm interested in it.
2. I'm not interested in it.

(3) Which of our Web News items do you like best?



International Dept.

The Building Center of Japan (BCJ)

6-1-8, Sotokanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8986, JAPAN

Tel: +81-3-5816-7525 Fax: +81-3-5816-7541

e-mail: kokusai@bcj.or.jp

URL: <http://www.bcj.or.jp/>

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