

# The 2024 White Paper on Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc. [Summary]

(FY2023 Summary of Death and Injury from Overwork in  
Japan and the Implementation of Measures the  
Government Has Taken to Prevent It)

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare,  
Labour Standards Bureau, Office for  
Policy on Karoshi Prevention

# “White Paper on Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc.” of the FY2024

- The White Paper on Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc. is a statutory white paper to be reported to the Diet based on the Act Promoting Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork. The 2024 edition is the 9th in the series (Cabinet decision and the Diet report).
- Key Points of the 2023 White Paper
  - This White Paper presents research findings on industries designated as priority targets for investigation (medical and healthcare, and arts and entertainment sectors) under the "Outline of Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork" (Cabinet Decision of August 2, 2024). It also includes analysis of data from DX and other advanced technology personnel highlighting areas requiring further research.

«Reference» Act Promoting Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork (Act No. 100 of 2014)  
(Annual Reports)

Article 6 Every year, the government must submit to the Diet a report giving a summary of death and injury from overwork in Japan and describing the implementation of measures that the government has taken to prevent it.

## Structure of the White Paper

### Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

- 1 Status of working hours
- 2 Status of measures for mental health in the workplace
- 3 Status of suicide

### Chapter 2 Current status of Karoshi, etc.

- 1 Status of compensation for karoshi, etc.
- 2 Status of compensation for occupational accidents involving national public employees
- 3 Status of compensation for occupational accidents involving local public employees

### Chapter 3 Changes to the Outline of Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork.

- 1 Background of the changes to the outline
- 2 Points of changes to the outline

### Chapter 4 Survey and analysis results on Karoshi, etc.

- 1 Analysis of cases involving workers' compensation claims
  - (1) Cases of decision to grant workers' compensation claims (approved),
  - (2) Analysis of hours on duty and intervals between work shifts, (3) Medical and healthcare practitioners (doctors and nurses)
- 2 Labour and social field survey (questionnaire survey)
  - (1) All industries (2) DX and other advanced technology personnel
  - (3) Professionals in the arts and entertainment (Staff)
- 3 Analysis of cases of occupational accidents involving public employees
- 4 Epidemiological studies, etc.

### Chapter 5 Status of implementation of measures to prevent Karoshi, etc.

- 1 Measures taken by labour administrative agencies, etc.
- 2 Survey and research, etc.
- 3 Enlightenment
- 4 Improvement of consultation system, etc.
- 5 Support for private organizations' activities

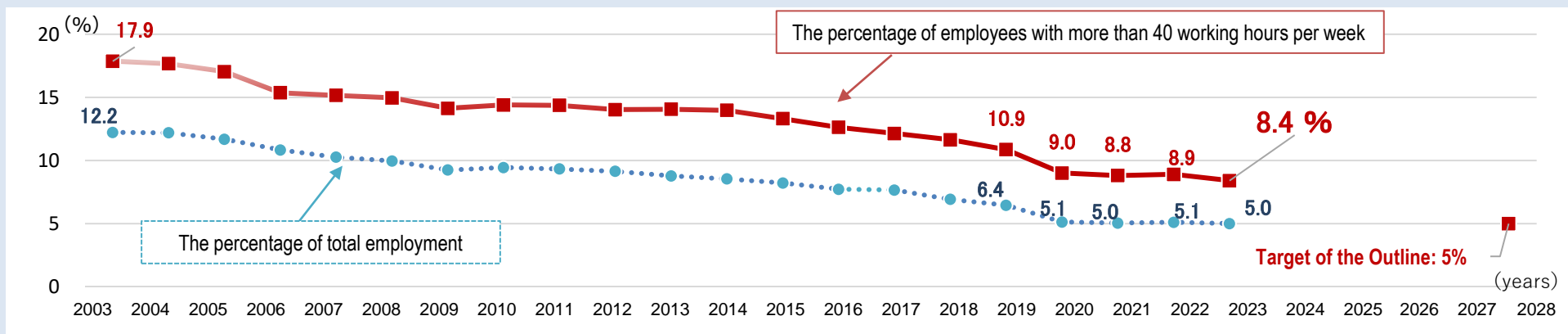
Columns with case studies of efforts by companies and organizations

# Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

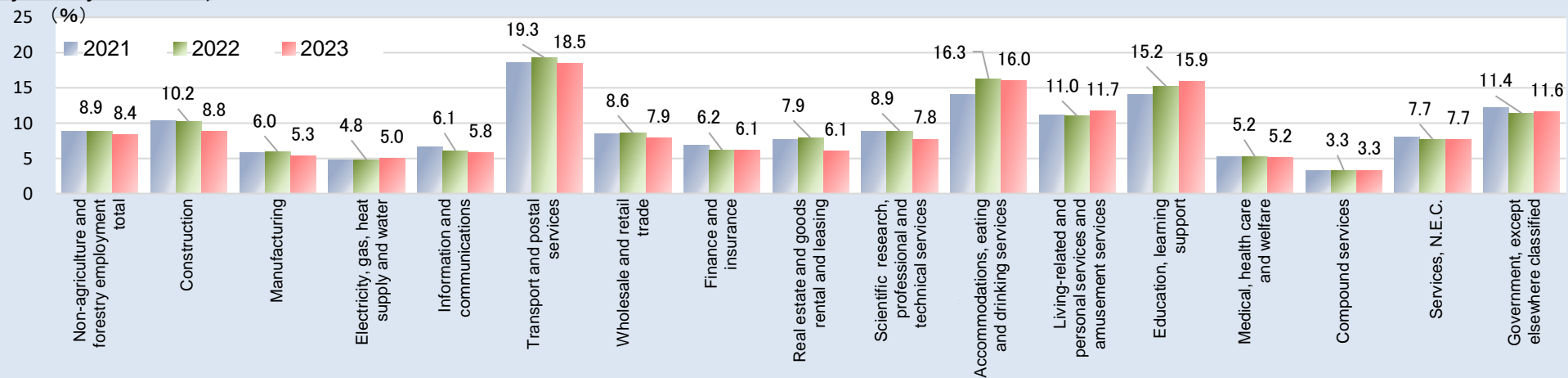
## 1 Status of working hours, etc. (Status of working hours)

- Among employees with more than 40 working hours per week, the percentage of those with more than 60 working hours per week is declining. The rate declined by 0.5 percentage points from 2022 to 8.4% in 2023.
- By industry sector, the 2023 figures show an increase in some industries over the previous year, while many industries remained unchanged or decreased.
  - \* Industries showing an increase over the previous year included: "Electricity, gas, heat supply and water," "Living-related and personal services and amusement services," "Education, learning support," "Government, except elsewhere classified".

### The percentage of employees with more than 60 working hours per week



### (By industry: 2021 – 2023)



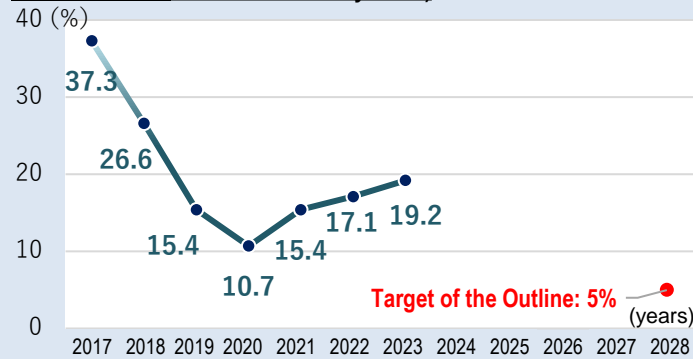
# Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

## 1 Status of working hours, etc. (Status of a system that sets a minimum limit on the interval between working hours (i.e. work-interval system) and annual paid leave)

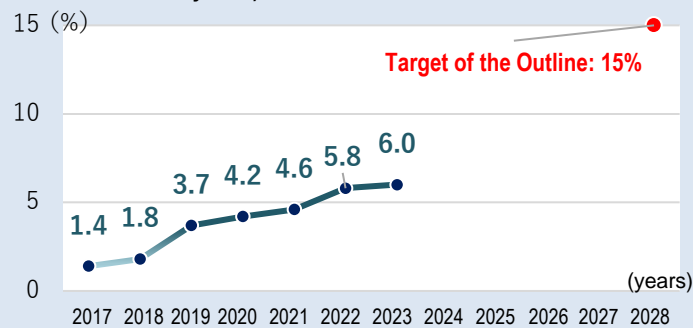
- While the percentage of companies that had never heard of the work-interval system increased, that of companies that had introduced the system continued to increase (2023: 6.0%).
- The percentage of employees taking annual paid leave has increased for eight consecutive years (2022: 62.1%).
- The average number of days of annual (paid) leave taken by national and local government employees increased from the previous year at main government ministries, designated cities and municipalities.

### Work-interval system

(Changes in the percentage of companies that answered "never heard of the work-interval system")



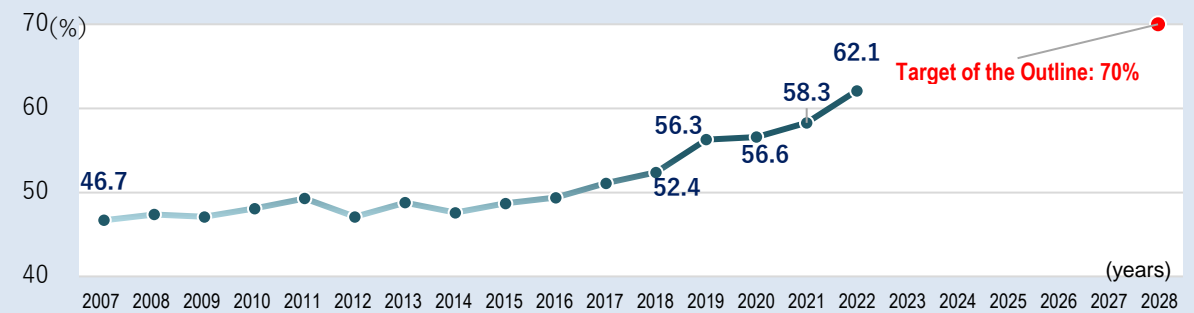
(Changes in the percentage of companies that have introduced the work-interval system)



(Source) Based on "General Survey on Working Conditions", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare  
 \* The "work-interval system" refers to setting a certain number of hours of rest between the end of the workday and the beginning of the next workday.  
 \* The survey was conducted based on the status as of January 1.

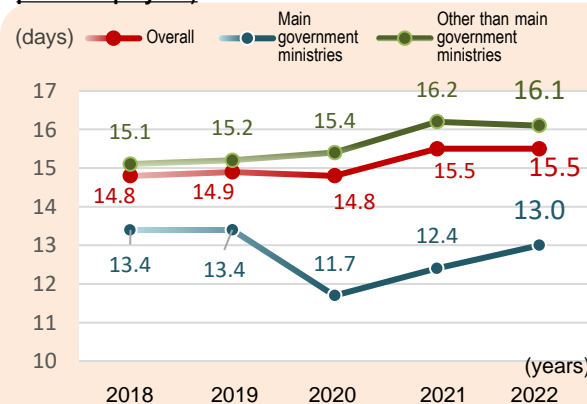
### Employees taking annual paid leave

(Changes in the percentage of annual paid leave taken)



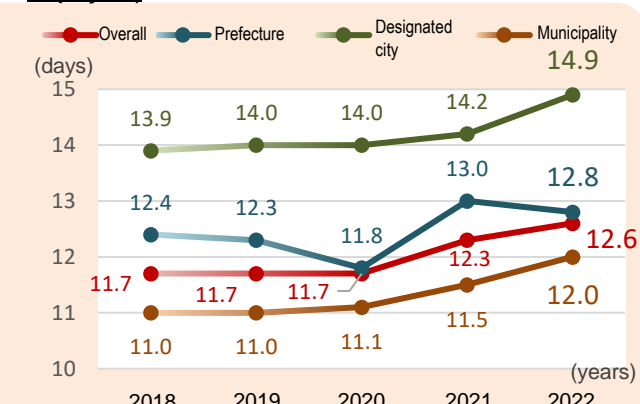
(Source) Based on "General Survey on Working Conditions", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare  
 \* It indicates the situation for one year in each surveyed year.  
 (If a company manages its data on a fiscal year basis, the figures indicate the status for the previous fiscal year.)  
 \* From April 2019, employers were required to designate the timing of annual paid leave of 5 days per year.

(Average number of days of annual leave taken by national public employees)



(Source) National Personnel Authority, based on annual "Survey of Remuneration of National Public Employees"

(Average number of days of annual leave taken by local public employees)



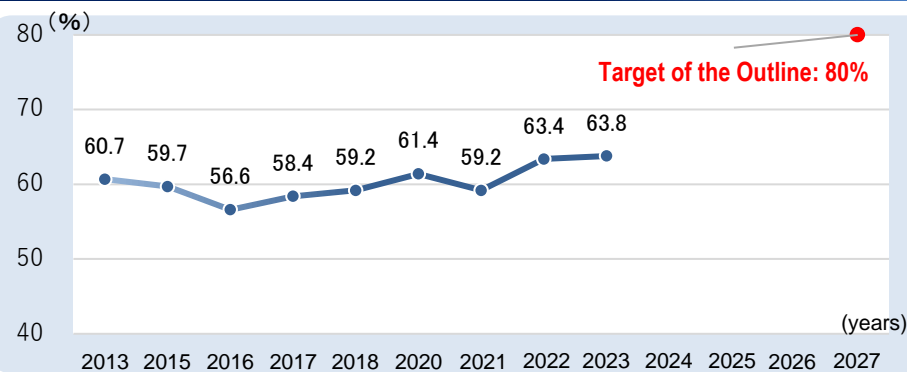
(Source) Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, based on annual "Survey on Working Conditions, etc. of Local Governments"

# Chapter 1 Status of measures for working hours and mental health, etc.

## 2 Status of measures for mental health in the workplace

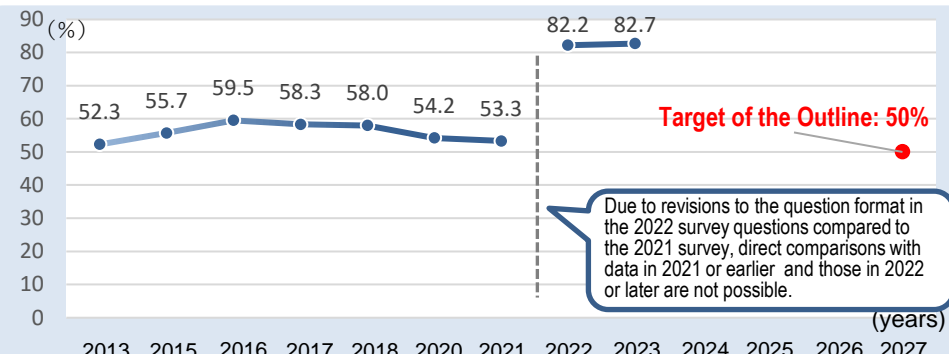
- The percentage of business establishments engaged in mental health measures has remained at around 60% (2023: 63.8%).
- 34.6% of small-scale establishments with fewer than 50 workers underwent stress checks in 2023.
- 82.7% of workers in 2023 reported having strong anxiety, worries, or stress related to their work or professional lives.

### Establishments engaged in mental health care



(Source) Based on "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health(actual condition survey)", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

### The percentage of workers having strong anxiety, worries, or stress related to their work or professional lives



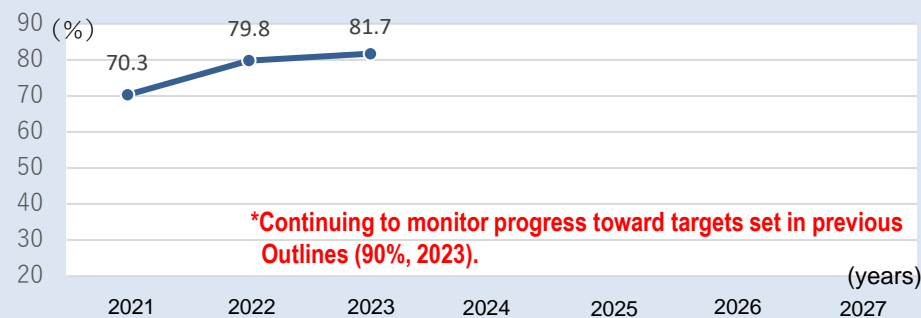
(Source) Based on "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health(actual condition survey)", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

### The percentage of small-scale establishments with fewer than 50 workers that have undergone stress checks



(Source) Based on "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health(actual condition survey)", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

### The percentage of workers with access to consultation resources for work-related anxiety, worries, or stress, including those outside the workplace



(Source) Based on "Survey on Industrial Safety and Health(actual condition survey)", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

# Chapter 2 Current Status of Karoshi, etc.

- Number of cases granted (approved) for workers' compensation
  - The number of cases of brain and heart diseases increased from the previous year, exceeding 200 cases for the first time in four years (FY 2023: 216 cases). The number of deaths also increased from the previous year (FY 2023: 58 cases).
  - Mental disorder cases have been increasing since 2019 (FY2023: 883 cases). Cases of suicide and attempted suicide increased for the first time in four years (FY2023: 79 cases).

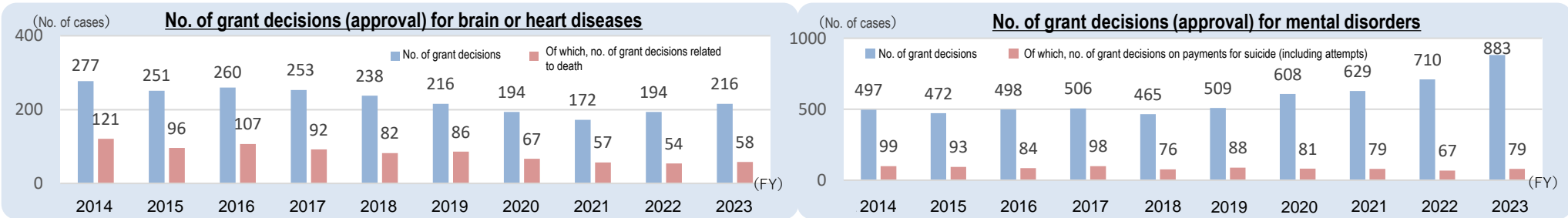
(Reference) Approved cases per million people (Est.) (All figures are FY2023 data).

Brain or heart diseases: 3.7 cases for private organization workers, 6.6 cases for national public officers, 3.9 cases for local public officers

Mental disorders: 15.2 cases for private organization workers, 13.1 cases for national public officers, 26.8 cases for local public officers

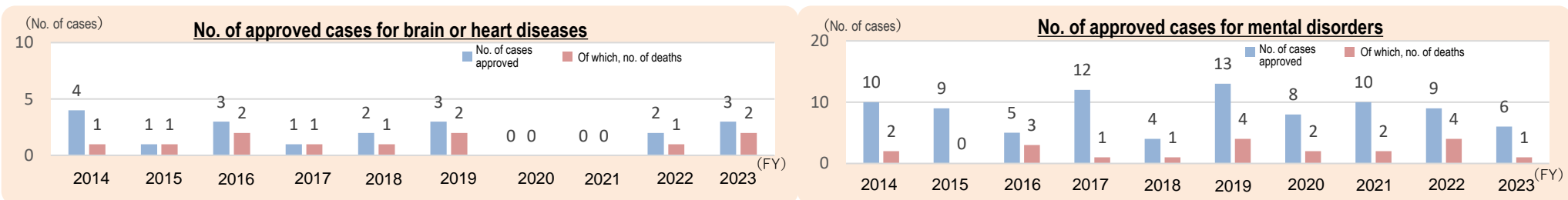
\* Figures for the "private organization workers" are estimated from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' "Labour Force Survey," for "national public officers" from the Cabinet Bureau of Personnel Affairs' "Statistical Table of National Public Employees in the Regular Service Tenure of Office Conditions," etc. and for "local public officers" from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' "Survey on Actual Salaries of Local Public Officers," etc.

## 1 Status of compensation for industrial accidents involving private organization workers



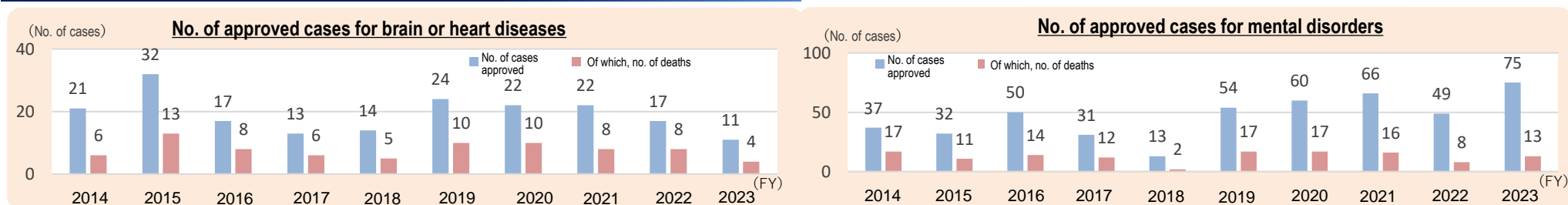
(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Compensation for death and injury from overwork"

## 2 Status of compensation for occupational accidents involving national public employees



(Source) National Personnel Authority

## 3 Status of compensation for occupational accidents involving local public employees



(Source) Fund for Local Government Employees' Accident Compensation

# Chapter 3 Changes to the Outline of Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork.

## Background to the changes (current status and issues)

- Following the enactment of the Act on the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork in June 2014, various initiatives have advanced work style reform under related laws and regulations. These efforts have yielded positive outcomes, including reduced percentages of employees working long hours and increased use of annual paid leave. As of April 2024, maximum overtime limits now apply to the construction industry, transportation services, doctors and other sectors, indicating growing momentum in preventing karoshi and related issues.
- Conversely, the number of work-related accident claims and decisions to pay compensation due to karoshi, etc. has been rising, highlighting the growing importance of measures to prevent long working hours, as well as those to address mental health and to prevent harassment.
- In addition, as working styles diversify, it is necessary to focus on the actual working conditions of freelancers, etc., ensuring their health and the situation regarding harassment.

## Points of Change

### 1 Reviewing the past decade after the development of the Outline and promoting further efforts

- With 2025 marking the 10-year milestone since the development of the Outline, to review the results of research and efforts over past years and further consider and promote future measures based on these results.

### 2 Ensuring strict compliance with maximum overtime work limits, providing guidance to prevent the recurrence of karoshi, etc. and strengthening measures for freelancers, etc.

- To require companies to comply with the regulations on maximum overtime work limits that were fully implemented in April 2024 .
- To provide stronger guidance to prevent recurrence of karoshi, etc., such as requiring companies that have repeatedly caused karoshi, etc., cases to develop improvement plans.
- After enforcement of the Act on Ensuring Proper Transactions Involving Specified Entrusted Business Operators , to ensure the implementation of the Act, to strengthen health and safety measures and health management for individual business operators, etc. and to expand the special insurance coverage.

### 3 Conducting more surveys and analysis focusing on the types of industries and harassment

- The Arts and Entertainment sector was added to the list of priority industries, etc.
- With regard to the cases of karoshi, etc., to collect and analyze information on the status of measures to prevent harassment that are required of employers.

### 4 Promoting efforts by relevant parties, including outside the national government

- To support measures to prevent customer harassment by industry type
- Employers provide training on labour-related laws and regulations to managers, supervisors and young workers.
- Labour unions periodically check to ensure that labour-related laws and regulations are being properly implemented in the workplace.

# Chapter 4 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

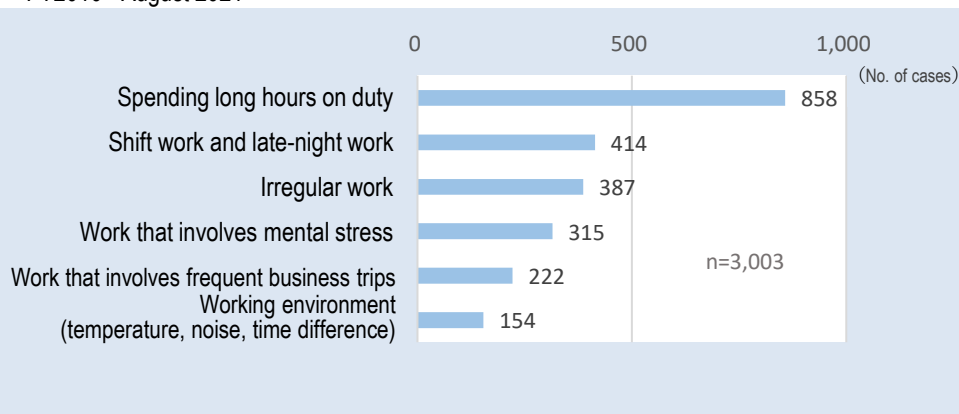
## 1 Analysis for cases of workers' compensation decisions (approved) (Number of cases caused by stress factors other than working hours, etc.)

(Source) Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, based on "Comprehensive study for the current status and preventive strategies of overwork-related disorders in FY2023"

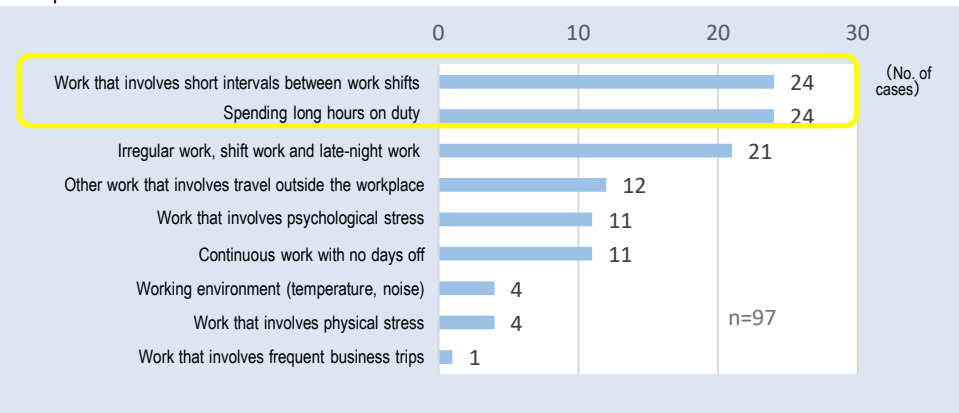
- Of all workers' compensation decisions (approved) made over the 12 years from FY 2010 to FY 2021, those related to **brain and heart diseases** were analyzed.  
(However, the subjects of analysis for ② and ③ represent the 11 years from FY 2010 to FY 2020)
- Following the revision of the approval criteria for brain and heart diseases in September 2021, stress factors other than working hours are to be also taken into consideration. In terms of stress factors other than working hours, "short intervals between work shifts" and "spending long hours on duty" accounted for 24 cases each (24.7% respectively) and "irregular work, shift work and late-night work" accounted for 21 cases (21.6%).

### ① Number of cases caused by stress factor other than working hours, etc.

<Categories based on the approval criteria prior to the revision (September 2021):  
FY2010 - August 2021>

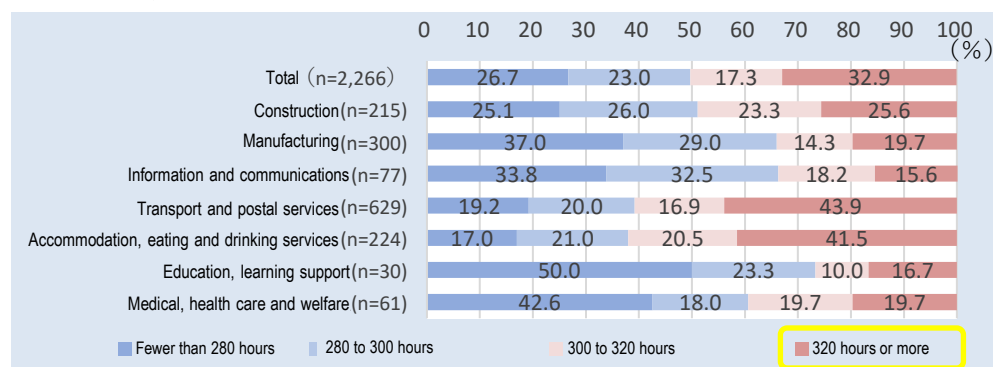


<Categories based on the approval criteria post to the revision (September 2021):  
September 2021 – March 2022>



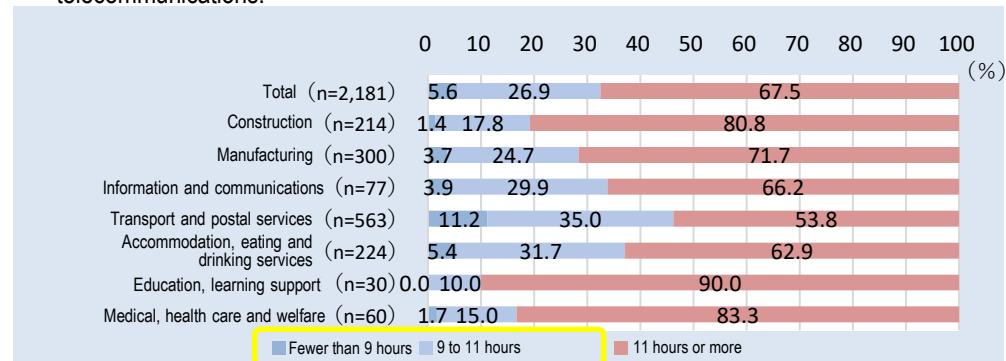
### ② Average hours on duty per month (by industry)

- Industries with a high proportion of "more than 320 hours" include "transport and postal services", "accommodation and food services" and "construction."



### ③ Average interval between work shifts (by industry)

- Industries with a high proportion of "fewer than 11 hours" are "transportation and postal services", "accommodation, eating and drinking services" and "information and telecommunications."



\* ② and ③ include industries that are considered priority targets for survey research in the Outline for the Prevention of Karoshi, etc.

# Chapter 4 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

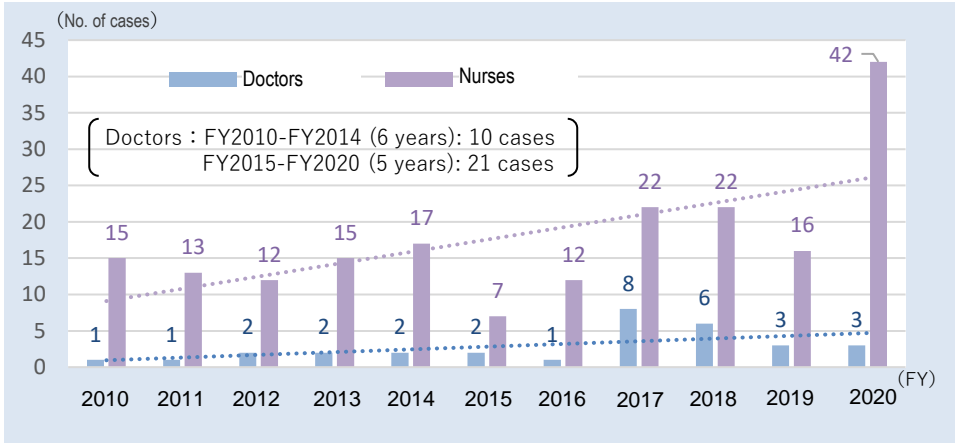
## 2 Analysis for cases of workers' compensation decisions (approved) (Medical and healthcare practitioners (doctors and nurses))

(Source) Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, based on "Comprehensive study for the current status and preventive strategies of overwork-related disorders in FY2023"

- For medical practitioners (doctors and nurses), as a priority industry, cases of workers' compensation decisions (approved) for mental disorders were analyzed for 11 years from FY 2010 to FY 2020. (However, the subjects of analysis for ③ represent the 9 years from FY 2012 to FY 2020)

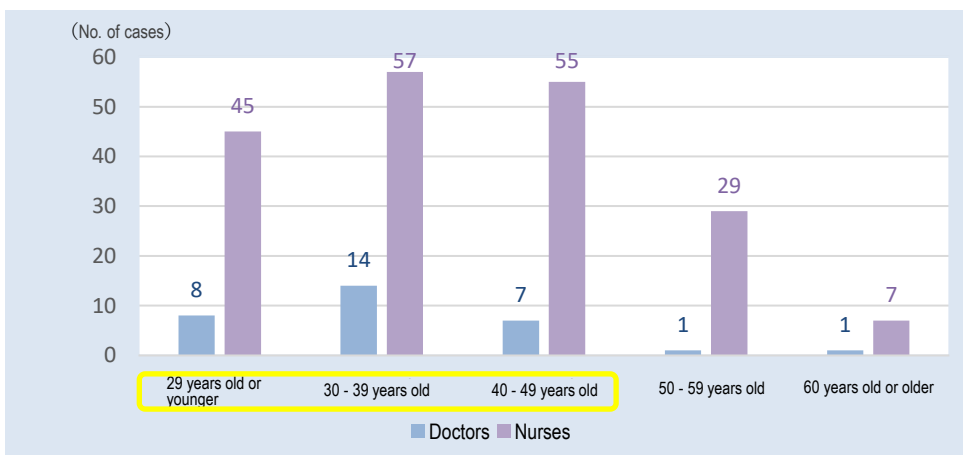
### ① Number of cases for which workers' compensation was decided (approved)

- In recent years, the number of cases of doctors and nurses has been increasing.



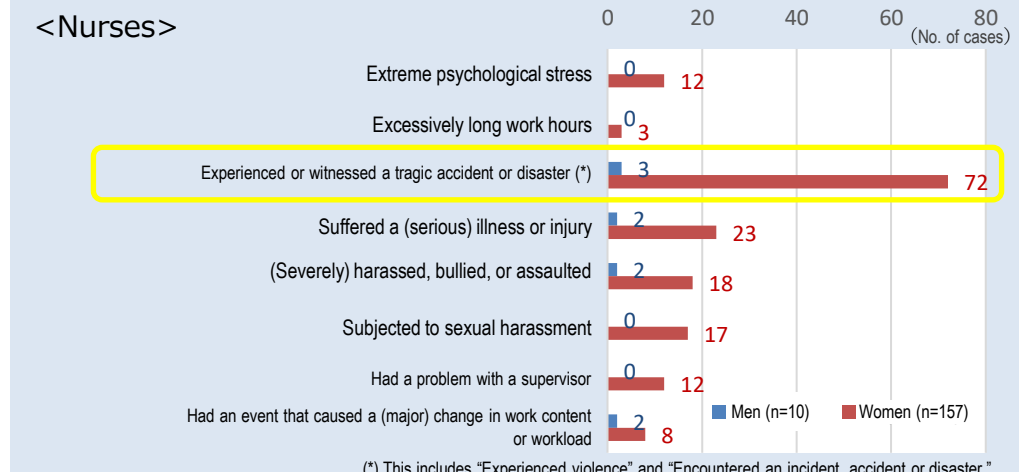
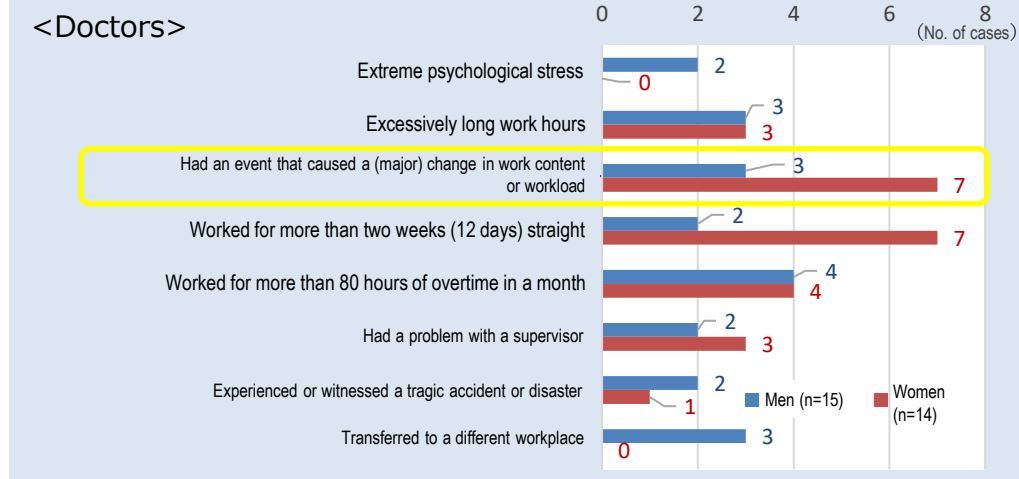
### ② Number of cases by age group at the time of onset

- Most cases of doctors and nurses are in their 30s.



### ③ Events that resulted in workers' compensation being approved

- The most common response for doctors was "Had an event that caused a (major) change in my work content or workload," while for nurses it was "Experienced or witnessed a tragic accident or disaster."



(\*) This includes "Experienced violence" and "Encountered an incident, accident or disaster."

# Chapter 4 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

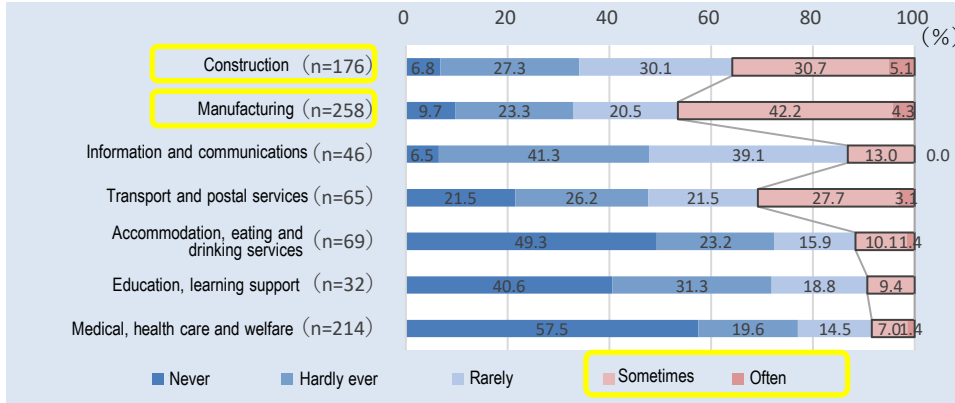
## 3 Questionnaire survey targeting companies (all industries) (issues related to business practices and contracts)

(Source) Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, based on "Comprehensive study for the current status and preventive strategies of overwork-related disorders in FY2023"

● Questionnaire survey conducted at companies (Survey period: December 2023 to January 2024). Analysis of issues concerning business practices, contracts, etc. in priority industries.

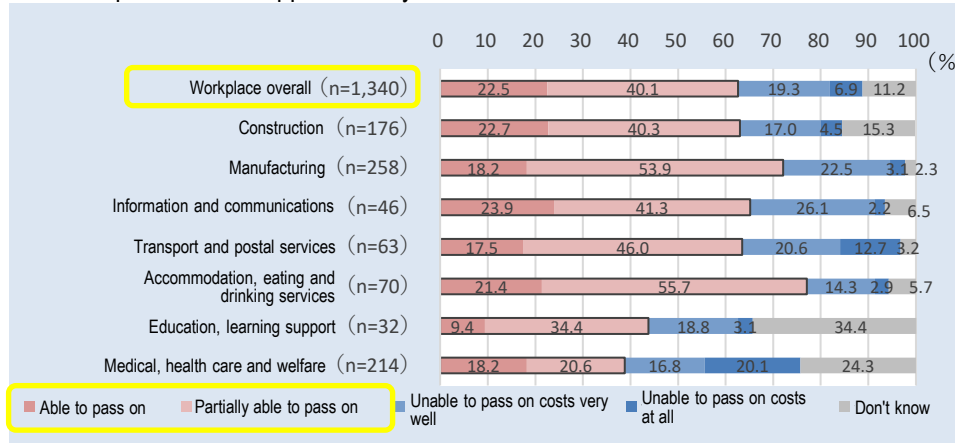
### ① Whether or not having experienced contracts for which they find it difficult to meet the deadline (by industry)

○ The collective percentage of those who answered "Sometimes" and "Often" was highest in the manufacturing industry, followed by the construction industry.



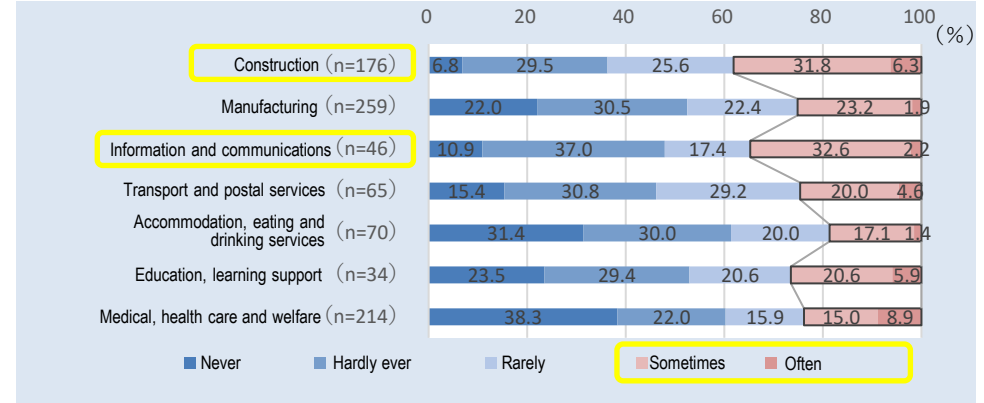
### ③ Whether or not there is scope to pass on price increases (by industry)

○ The collective percentage of those who answered "Able to pass on" and "Partially able to pass on" was approximately over 50%.



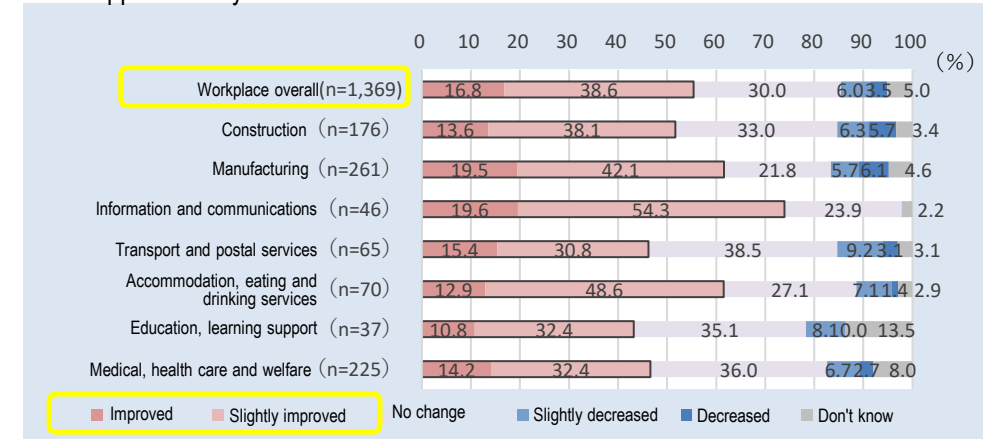
### ② Whether or not having experienced contracts for which they find it difficult to secure personnel (by industry)

○ The collective percentage of those who answered "Sometimes" and "Often" was highest in the Construction industry, followed by the Information and communications industry.



### ④ Whether labour productivity has changed compared to three years ago (by industry)

○ The collective percentage of those who answered "Improved" and "Slightly improved" is approximately over 50%.



\* ① - ④ include industries that are considered priority targets for research in the Outline for the Prevention of Karoshi, etc.

# Chapter 4 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

## 4 Questionnaire survey targeting workers (those in charge of DX and other advanced technologies)

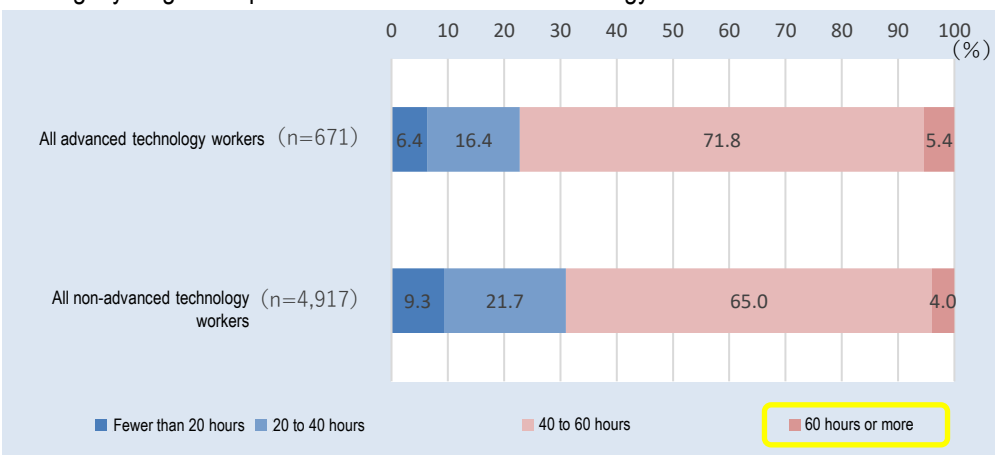
(Source) Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, based on "Comprehensive study for the current status and preventive strategies of overwork-related disorders in FY2023"

- An additional questionnaire survey was conducted for those in charge of advanced technologies such as DX (digital transformation), which is expected to improve business efficiency (period surveyed: December 2023).

\* Other than DX, it also includes engineers and researchers working with technologies such as AI, IoT and big data analysis, as well as administrative staff who handle paperwork related to cutting-edge technologies.

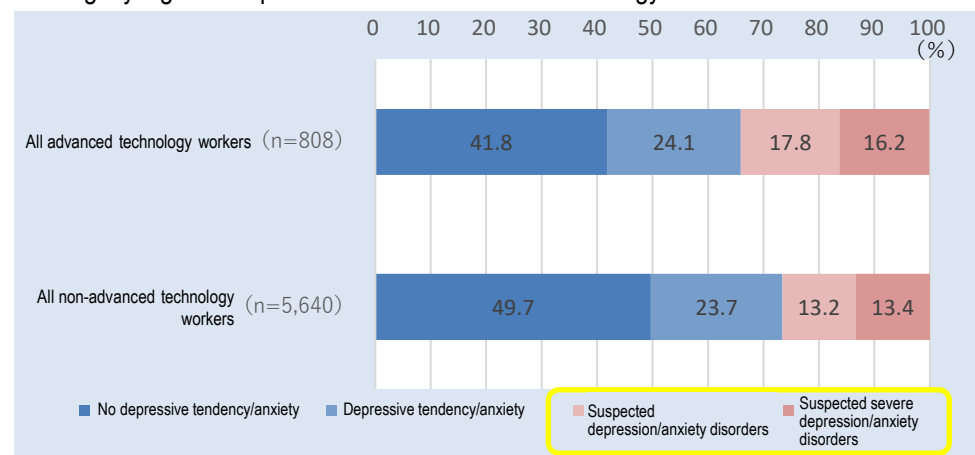
### ① Work hours per week

- Slightly longer compared to all non-advanced technology workers.



### ② Depressive tendencies/anxiety

- Slightly higher compared to all non-advanced technology workers.



### ③ Stress felt when taking up a job related to advanced technology

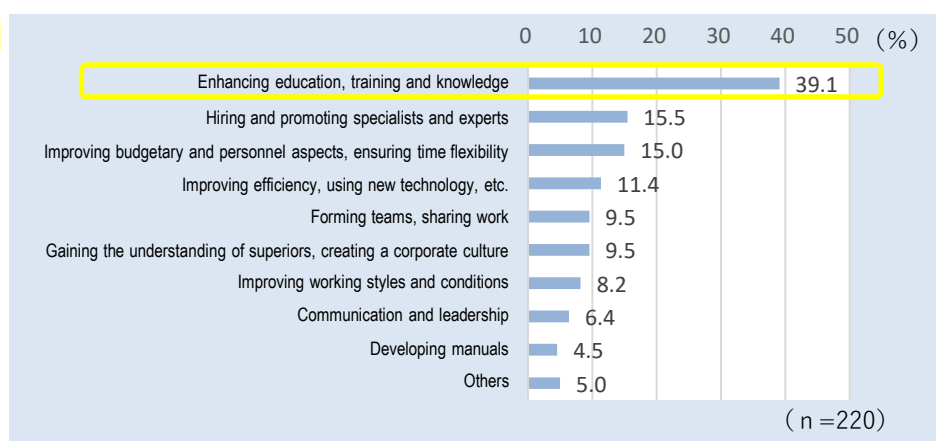
- The most common response was "Having never worked with advanced technology before, it took me a long time to learn the technology".

Response	(%)
Having never worked with advanced technology before, it took me a long time to learn the technology.	29.6
My workload increased because I had to do work related to advanced technology, in addition to my normal work.	23.0
There was no one who understood the details of advanced technology, thus specific people were overworked.	14.0
Stressful because my working hours increased.	9.4
Stressful because it was mentally challenging work.	9.2
Because the people requesting the work were unfamiliar with the technical details, they did not give detailed instructions when requesting the work.	8.3
Due to a lack of basic knowledge and skills related to advanced technology, I felt overwhelmed by the workload or found it difficult to carry out the work.	7.2
The tight deadline left me very little time in which to achieve results.	6.8
Because the details of the advanced technology were difficult to understand, I felt overwhelmed by the workload or found it difficult to carry out the work.	6.6
Due to a lack of basic education in advanced technology, I felt overwhelmed by the workload or found it difficult to carry out the work.	6.6
Never felt any particular stress.	23.8

(N=808) \* Top 10 items were determined.

### ④ Measures to reduce the stress that those in charge of advanced technology consider to be effective

- The most common response was "Enhancing education, training and knowledge."



(n=220)

\* Multiple answers were allowed for the open-ended questions and the responses were classified into ten categories.

# Chapter 4 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

## 5 Questionnaire survey targeting workers (Arts and entertainment workers (staff))

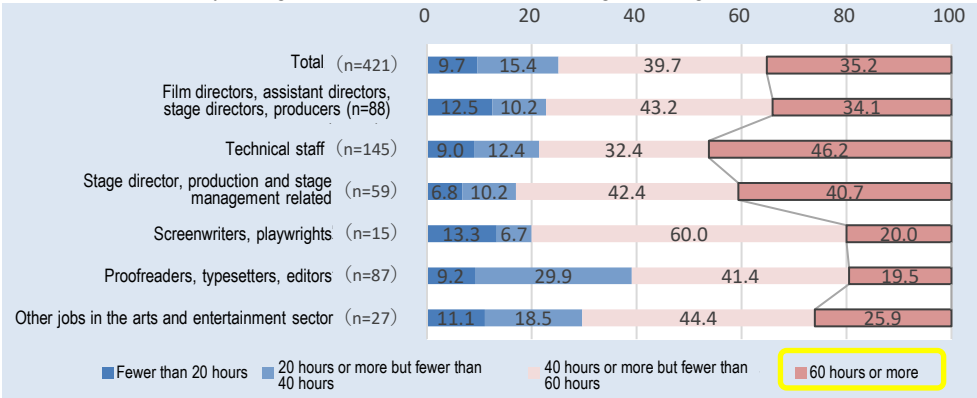
(Source) Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, based on "Comprehensive study for the current status and preventive strategies of overwork-related disorders in FY2023"

- A questionnaire was conducted targeting arts and entertainment workers (staff)\*, as a priority industry, etc. (Survey period: October to December 2023).

\* Self-employed or those working under an employment contract, etc.

### ① Hours spent at work, including breaks

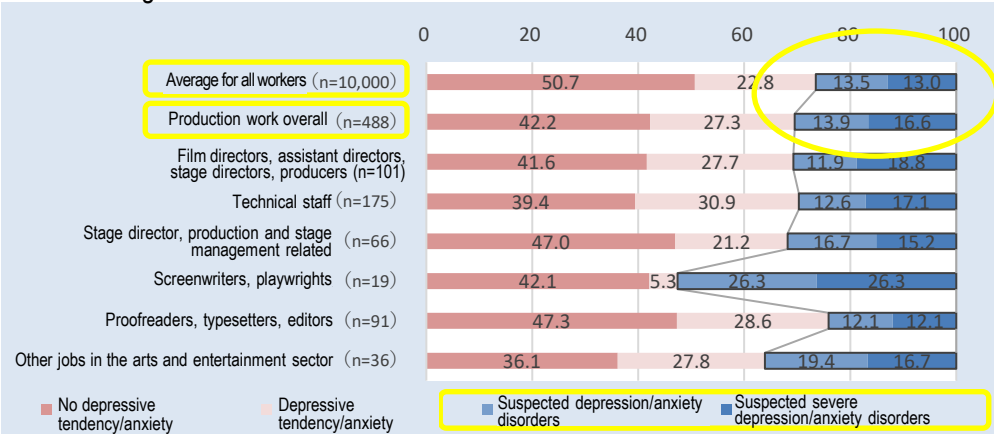
- The percentage of those working "60 hours or more" was highest among "Technical staff", followed by "Stage director, production and stage management related."



\* This is the total of "Production work in the arts and entertainment sector", "Work that utilizes technical skills in the arts and entertainment sector (instructors of production techniques, etc.)" and "Work other than in the arts and entertainment sector."

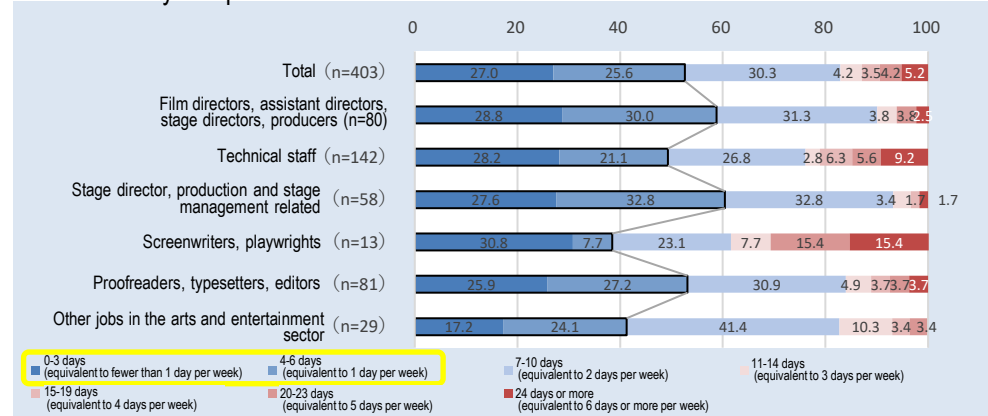
### ③ Depressive tendency/anxiety

- The number of workers with symptoms of depression and anxiety generally exceeds the average for all workers.



### ② Number of days off per month on the schedule

- Depending on the type of work, between 38.5 and 60.4% of the respondents have one or fewer days off per week.

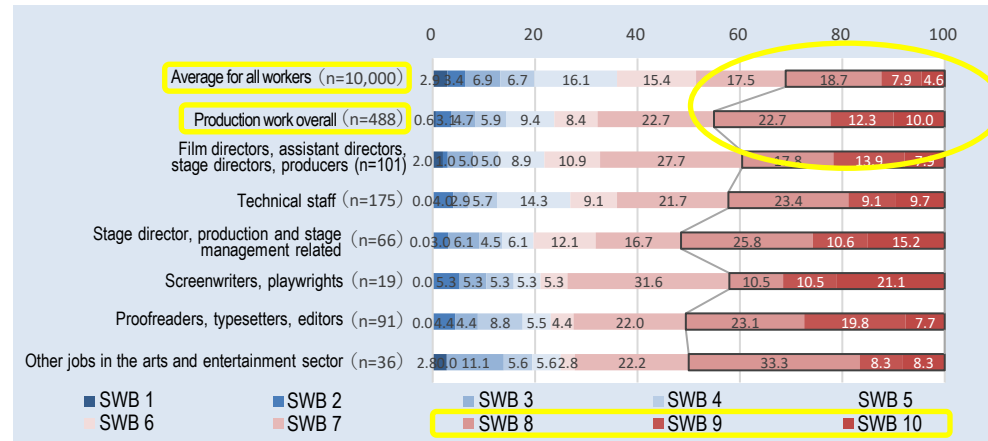


\*1 Please note that the figures given are the total number of respondents due to multiple responses being allowed for job type.

\*2 Non-working days on the schedule refer to days when there are no meetings or work-related rehearsals.

### ④ SWB

- SWB generally exceeds that of workers as a whole.

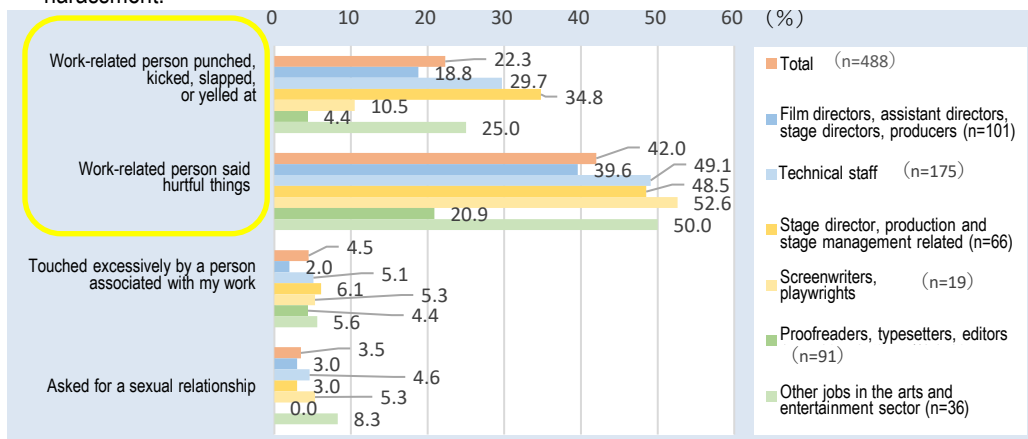


# Chapter 4 Survey and analysis results on karoshi, etc.

## 5 Questionnaire survey targeting workers (Arts and entertainment workers (staff))

### ⑤ Experiences of harassment

- The percentage of those who responded that “Work-related person said hurtful things” was generally high, followed by a certain percentage of those having experienced physical attacks, etc. and sexual harassment.

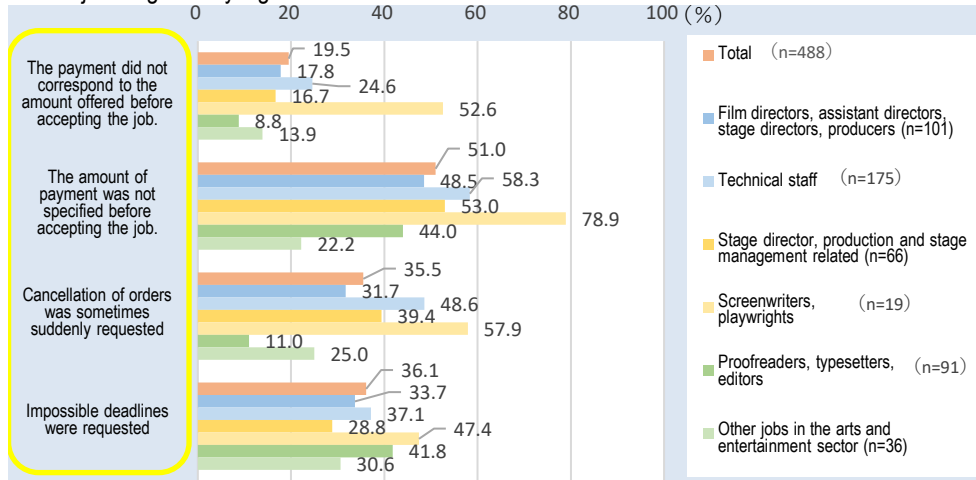


\*1 Please note that the figures given are the total number of respondents, due to multiple responses being allowed for job type.

\*2 Regardless of the time period (not limited to experiences in the past year).

### ⑥ Experience of problems arising from business transactions

- The percentage of responses such as “The amount of payment is not specified before accepting the job” is generally high.



### Efforts by administrative agencies

(1) As part of efforts to establish appropriate contractual relationships in the field of culture and the arts, the Agency for Cultural Affairs promotes the dissemination and awareness-raising of the guidelines, including the model contract form published in July 2022, as well as the implementation of training sessions and the establishment of a consultation service, to improve the business environment for people involved in culture and the arts, including freelance artists.

(2) The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry provides guidance and support for private-sector efforts that contribute to the sustainable development of the film industry. To this end, it aims to help establish equal relationships between film producers, production companies and the many freelance workers who make up the majority of on-site staff. Specifically, the Ministry formulates guidelines aimed at improving the working environment and developing human resources, as well as ensuring fair and transparent transactions and eradicating long working hours and harassment. Following the establishment of the Japan Motion Picture Production Standards Association, a system for certifying films that have been produced properly in accordance with the guidelines (that meet the Japan Motion Picture Production Standards) has been launched since April 2023.

(3) To provide a secure working environment for freelancers, the Act on Ensuring Proper Transactions Involving Specified Entrusted Business Operators\* was established in April 2023 and enforced in November 2024. In May 2024, the relevant government ordinances, guidelines, etc. were developed, along with efforts to carefully disseminate the contents of the Act.

\* To ensure the appropriateness of transactions, this Act obliges businesses that entrust specified entrusted business operator to specified contractors to clearly state the details of benefits, etc., establish payment due dates and pay remuneration by those dates. It also stipulates the obligation to accurately indicate recruitment information and to establish a consultation system related to harassment to improve the working environment for such contractors.

(4) In March 2021, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare issued a joint notice with related ministries and agencies to arts and entertainment industries groups, ensuring them to take thorough measures to prevent accidents while professionals in the entertainment work are on duty, making member companies thoroughly aware of the situation, and promoting approach by preparing guidelines, etc., considering the business characteristics of member companies, etc.

(5) Persons other than those under employment contracts and who are “engaged in the work of acting, directing, planning music, entertainment and other arts in broadcasting programs (including advertisement broadcasts), cinemas, yose (storyteller) theaters, stage theaters, etc.” shall be covered by the special insurance coverage of the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance from April 1, 2021.

(6) In March 2021, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Fair Trade Commission, the Small and Medium Enterprise Agency and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare developed the “Guidelines for Providing a Safe Working Environment for Freelancers”, aiming to disseminate and utilize them.

# Chapter 5 Status of implementation of measures to prevent karoshi, etc. 1

## 1 Measures taken by labour administrative agencies, etc.

- (1) Enforcement of regulations on maximum overtime work limits for industries placed under a grace period, etc.**
  - With respect to the construction industry, driving services, doctors, etc., to which the application of the overtime limit regulations has been deferred, to provide support to ensure smooth application of the regulations from April 2024.
- (2) Thoroughly implementing measures to reduce long work hours**
  - To provide inspection and guidance to companies where workers work for long hours and where karoshi, etc. have occurred.
  - To give guidance to the head offices of companies that engage in illegal long working hours at multiple branches, etc., to make company-wide improvements.
  - To ensure the proper monitoring of work hours based on the guideline.
  - To give guidance by the Director of the Prefectural Labour Bureau to the top executives of the companies engaged in illegal long working hours at multiple workplaces and disclose the companies' name.
- (3) Taking measures to prevent health problems caused by overwork**
  - To provide guidance regarding how to monitor work hours and ensure that workers who work long hours should be interviewed by a doctor, etc.
- (4) Taking measures for mental health**
  - To provide guidance on mental health measures to workplaces where a decision (approval) has been made to provide workers' compensation payments for mental disorders.
- (5) Taking measures for prevention of harassment**
  - To provide guidance to offices that have not yet taken measures to prevent harassment and to instruct offices where incidents of harassment have occurred regarding post-action measures and efforts to prevent recurrence.
- (6) Measures to prevent the recurrence of karoshi, etc. at companies where deaths due to overwork have occurred**
  - As well as providing existing guidance to companies where deaths due to overwork have occurred to provide guidance requesting the development of company-wide preventive measures at the company headquarters.
  - To require companies that have had multiple cases of karoshi etc. within a certain period of time to develop an "improvement plan to prevent karoshi etc." under the prefectural Labour Bureau Director who has jurisdiction over the head office and to provide advice and guidance to ensure that efforts based on the plan are implemented company-wide.

## 2 Survey and research, etc.

- (1) Analysis of karoshi, etc. cases**
  - To analyze Karoshi, etc. cases of occupational accidents by private/public service.
- (2) Survey and analysis of karoshi, etc. from the perspective of labour and social fields**
  - To conduct a questionnaire survey of workers and workplaces to analyze the background factors of karoshi, etc. as well as the factors that form a good work environment.
- (3) Epidemiological studies, etc.**
  - To conduct long-term research on the relationship between work hours, work stress and the results of health checkups, etc. and to implement measures to improve the workplace environment and verify the effects of such measures, etc.
- (4) Development of tools to support measures to prevent karoshi, etc.**
  - To develop tools to support measures to prevent karoshi, etc., based on the results of previous studies.

## 3 Enlightenment

- (1) Publicizing and raising awareness among the public**
  - To publicize and raise awareness through various media, including posters and brochures, mainly during "Enlightenment Month of Karoshi, etc. Prevention" (November).
- (2) Disseminating information and enlightening students at universities, high schools, etc. about labour-related laws and regulations, etc.**
  - In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), to dispatch lecturers and make e-learning materials available at junior high schools, high schools and universities, etc., as a means of raising awareness of the program.
- (3) Publicizing and raising awareness of the need to reduce long work hours**
  - During "Enlightenment Month of Karoshi, etc. Prevention" (November), ① To request labour and management groups to cooperate in publicizing and raising awareness of efforts to reduce long work hours, etc.; ② To have the Director of the Prefectural Labour Bureau visit best practice companies; ③ To prioritize inspection of workplaces where karoshi, etc. have occurred; ④ To provide nationwide toll-free telephone consultation services; and ⑤ To implement a "Campaign to Eliminate Overwork" that includes seminars for employers and HR staff with the aim of promoting voluntary measures to prevent overwork.
- (4) Publicizing and raising awareness of the prevention of health problems due to overwork**
  - To publicize the "Measures to be taken by business operators to prevent health problems due to overwork."
  - To raise awareness among the public and businesses during "National Occupational Health Week" (October) with the promotion of comprehensive measures to prevent health problems caused by overwork as a priority issue to enlighten the public, businesses and other stakeholders.
- (5) Promoting the introduction of the work-interval system**
  - To hold symposiums via online distribution and promote the introduction using "Manual for Introduction and Operation of the Work-Interval System"
  - To provide support for small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for the introduction of the work-interval system through the use of grants to SMEs.
- (6) Encouraging companies to review their work styles and promoting the use of annual paid leave**
  - To approach leading companies in the industry and in the region
  - Providing information regarding the initiatives of companies engaged in advanced work-style and vacation-style reforms on the "Work-Style and Vacation-Style Improvement Portal Site."
  - To hold a symposium on work-style and vacation-style reforms
  - To promote the use of annual paid leave in a timely manner, as well as to encourage employees to take leave that takes advantage of local features.
- (7) Disseminating information and enlightening the public about mental health measures**
  - To operate "Kokoro-no-mimi (Ear of mind)", a portal site for workers' mental health and provide various information on mental health measures.
  - To hold a symposium on mental health in the workplace and provide comprehensive information on mental health measures.

## 3 Enlightenment (cont.)

### (8) Disseminating information and enlightening the public to prevent workplace harassment

- To provide intensive publicity during the “Month for Eliminating Harassment in the Workplace” (December)
- To provide information on the portal site, Akarui Shokuba Ouendan (Cheering Squad for a Cheerful Workplace), including precedents related to harassment, examples of corporate initiatives, in-house training materials, video and other materials.
- As part of measures to prevent terrible nuisance behaviors from customers (so-called customer harassment), to prepare a “Corporate Manual on Measures against Customer Harassment,” leaflets and enlightenment posters in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies and publicize examples of companies’ efforts.

### (9) Responding to diverse work styles including teleworking, etc.

- To promote telework that enables employers to manage the workforce appropriately and allows a secure environment for workers through the provision of counseling and consulting services, the establishment of a comprehensive portal site and subsidies for the introduction of telecommunications equipment, etc.
- To publicize the “Guidelines for the Promotion of Side Business” and promote health management apps to maintain and improve the health of workers who have side business.
- To make the necessary preparations to facilitate the implementation of the Act on Ensuring Proper Transactions Involving Specified Entrusted Business Operators and to promote the dissemination and use of the “Guidelines for Creating a Safe Environment Where People Can Work on a Freelance Basis.”

### (10) Promoting efforts based on business practices, work environment, etc.

- For the industry of trucking, teachers, medical practitioner, information and telecommunications and construction workers, the government agencies and industry associations, etc. related to each industry take the lead in improving the working environment, including business practices.

### (11) Promoting efforts for young workers, elderly workers, workers with disabilities, etc.

- To support mental health education for young workers, provide assistance to ensure the health and safety of older workers through the Age-Friendly Subsidy, etc. and support workers with illnesses in achieving a good balance between work and medical treatment.

### (12) Disseminating information and enlightening public employees

- For national public officers, to work on reducing overtime and promoting the planned use of annual leave, to introduce rules requiring efforts to be made to ensure intervals between working hours and to provide training in mental health care and prevention of harassment via e-learning and other means.
- For local public officers, to provide local governments with advice on operating overtime limits regulations and health security measures, ensuring intervals between working hours, mental health measures and anti-harassment measures, etc. and to hold training sessions to raise awareness of work style reform, etc.

## 4 Improvement of consultation system, etc.

### (1) Establishing consultation services for working conditions and health care

- To provide consultation on working conditions, such as illegal overtime work, through the “Labour Standards Advice Hotline” (free telephone consultation service on weeknights, weekends and holidays).
- To provide consultation on mental health issues and health problems caused by overwork via SNS, email and telephone at “Kokoro-no-mimi” (Ear of mind), a portal site for workers’ mental health.
- To provide consultation services for victims of customer harassment and harassment during job hunting at the “Harassment Counseling Room.”
- To provide consultation services on problems between freelancers and clients through “Freelance Problems Dial 110.”

### (2) Establishing a consultation system for public employees, etc.

- Establishing a “Counseling Room for Mental Health” for national public employees (online counseling were expanded to all counseling rooms in 2023), which can be used by employees of each ministry and agency and their family; a “Counseling Room for Mental Health-Related Return to Work” where specialist physicians provide consultation on returning to work and preventing recurrence of mental health problems among employees who have taken long-term sick leave due to mental health issues.
- Providing local public employees with free health counseling by telephone at the Mutual Aid Association of Prefectural Government Personnel. Also, in cooperation with the Japan Local Government Employee Safety & Health Association, establishing a free consultation service at the Fund for Local Government Employees’ Accident Compensation for employees of local governments and other organizations overseeing measures for mental health

### (3) Consultation for bereaved children from karoshi, etc.

- To establish online consultation service from 2022 to support the mentally healthy growth of the bereaved children from karoshi, etc.

## 5 Support for private organizations' activities

### (1) Organizing “Symposiums on Promotion of Prevention Measures for Karoshi, etc.”

- To organize “Symposiums on Promotion of Prevention Measures for Karoshi, etc.” in all prefectures to raise public awareness (48 venues + internet venues)

### (2) Organizing exchange programs for the bereaved children from karoshi

- To heal the physical and mental health of the bereaved children and hold a social event for the bereaved children and their guardians to provide counseling, etc.

## 【Column】 Towards a Society Free of Karoshi

Since its formation in November 1991, the **National Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims** marks its 33rd anniversary this year.

Many of our members are bereaved families who have lost their loved ones to karoshi and other causes, as well as victims of disasters. Faced with the sudden and unexpected loss of a loved one due to overwork, the families of victims of karoshi are desperate to find out the truth behind the death. While enduring our own hardships, we fight hard to uncover the facts and restore our late family's honor.

With the **aim of eradicating karoshi**, we are working to encourage and support each other in the same circumstances and prevent a repeat of this tragedy.



National Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims  
Emiko Teranishi, Representative Organizer

As a result of the lawmaking campaign we had been promoting, the **Act Promoting Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork** was finally **established in June 2014**. The Act came into force on November 1 of the same year, designating November of every year as an Enlightenment Month of Karoshi, etc. Prevention. The first government-sponsored symposium to promote measures to prevent karoshi, etc., was also held at the auditorium of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Following the host's greeting by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, there was a guest speech by the chairman of the Bipartisan Group of Lawmakers.

As a cooperating organization, the keynote speech was given by the National Defense Counsel for Victims of Karoshi and eight bereaved family members from the Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims voiced their tragic experiences. The venue was filled with around 400 people, from all walks of life, who gave us a round of applause of encouragement. Once again, I felt the significance and power of the Act being passed into law.

In December of the same year, the Council for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork was established, which set out the definition of karoshi, etc. and the principle that the government is responsible for measures to prevent karoshi, etc. and worked on formulating a general outline. Four members of the Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims participate in the council as members of the affected parties and actively share their ideas.

Also, we have started two new projects since FY2016.

The first is a **networking event for bereaved families**, including the wives having lost their husbands from karoshi, etc. and their children. Some victims' families are working as single parents, while applying for workers' compensation and taking their cases to court. Others are isolated from society due to prejudice and a lack of understanding, which causes them endless worries.

This is not just a problem for parents, but can also cause complicated issues for children. They need the help of specialists. We would like to express our appreciation for the support programs that are extending a helping hand to the bereaved families of the victims of karoshi.

The second is an **enlightenment class** for students about labour issues and working conditions. The class is mainly given by lawyers and bereaved families of karoshi victims, who convey the importance of acquiring the correct knowledge before people join the workforce and how to protect one's life. The program has been well received, with many repeat participants and new schools joining.

Marking the **10th anniversary of the establishment of the Act Promoting Measures to Prevent Death and Injury from Overwork** this year, we have the impression that awareness of the issue of karoshi has deepened and changed through educational symposiums and classes that the National Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims has participated in and that it has taken root.

Going forward, we think the point is the extent to which the law is being put to use in workplaces where long working hours and harassment consultations continue to increase.

**It is difficult to achieve this overnight, however, we will continue to work steadily towards the goal of a society free from karoshi.**

# Column List

1	Towards a Society Free of Karoshi	<b>Emiko Teranishi, Representative Organizer, National Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims</b>
2	Issues Surrounding the Understanding of the Reality of Karoshi, etc.	<b>Hiroshi Kawahito, Secretary General, National Defense Counsel for Victims of KAROSHI</b>
3	Improving the working environment through the guidance of labour standards inspectors	<b>Office for Special Measures against Overwork, Inspection Division, Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW</b>
4	Introduction to the development of tools to support efforts in the workplace to prevent karoshi, etc.	<b>Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health</b>
5	Introducing the efforts of the Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, at the Children's Tour Day in Kasumigaseki.	<b>Research Center for Overwork-Related Disorders, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health</b>
6	The Union's efforts on "Zero Karoshi, etc."	<b>Japanese Trade Union Confederation</b>
7	Keidanren's efforts towards the continuation and deepening of Work Style Reforms	<b>Japan Business Federation (Keidanren)</b>
8	Dispatching bereaved families of karoshi victims and experts on labour issues as lecturers to schools	- In 2023, the eighth year of the program, 15,626 students participated in 192 sessions - <b>Yutaka Iwaki, Executive Director, National Center for Preventing Karoshi</b>
9	[Efforts by Companies] Case study: Maintaining the health of employees through the active involvement of area public health nurses, etc.	- <b>Nichirei Foods, Inc.</b> -
10	[Efforts by Companies] Case study: Efforts by care facilities to protect the human rights of both staff and residents	- <b>Meglus Inc.</b> -
11	[Efforts by Companies] Case Study: Efforts to achieve work style reform for drivers through the introduction of IT and the creation of new business models	- <b>Nonoichi Unyu Kiko Co., Ltd.</b> -
12	[Efforts by Companies] Realizing work style reform for doctors who have side business and through inter-professional collaboration	- <b>Niigata Medical Center</b> -
13	[Efforts by Companies] Responding to the upper limit restrictions through revisions to personnel policies and the promotion of DX	- <b>Taiyo Construction Co., Ltd.</b> -
14	Symposium to Promote Measures to Prevent Karoshi, etc. in 2023	<b>Office for the Promotion of Measures to Karoshi, etc., General Affairs Division, Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW</b>
15	Report on the Exchange Meeting for Bereaved Children from Karoshi, etc.	<b>Shinobu Watanabe, Coordinator, Exchange Group for Bereaved Children from Karoshi, National Association of Families Fighting Karoshi</b>
16	Associations of Families Fighting Karoshi in various fields and regions	<b>National Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims, In charge of occupational accidents for public employees, Sachiko Kudo;</b> <b>Kanagawa Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims, etc., Sachiko Kudo; Hyogo Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims, Fukunaga;</b> <b>Shikoku Association for Bereaved Families of Karoshi Victims, etc., Naozumi Kubo</b>
17	The Japan Society for Karoshi Research held its 9th National Convention	<b>Kenichi Kuroda, Professor Emeritus of Meiji University, Former Representative Director of the Japan Society for Karoshi Research</b>