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Handling Information During a Disaster



When a major disaster occurs, lots of information begins to circulate. This includes information explaining the scale of the disaster, reporting on the damage, and intending to support those affected by the disaster. The information is diverse, and every piece of it may appear to be useful. However, some of the information may be questionable in terms of its accuracy or authenticity.

For example, following the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, false rumors spread that “Koreans had thrown poison into wells.”

Vigilante groups and others in the disaster-stricken areas carried out acts of violence and killings against Koreans and people of Korean origin.

Similarly, during the 2018 Northern Osaka Earthquake, false rumors circulated, including claims that “a Hankyu train had derailed” and that “foreigners were committing crimes such as theft.” In particular, information concerning essential lifelines, such as the claim that “the entire city of Minoh was experiencing a water outage,” tended to be widely shared with others. As a result, inaccurate information obtained through X was sometimes accepted as credible.

Similar things have happened across different periods of history. In both cases, people said things such as, “If I had taken a moment to stay calm and think about it, I would have realized that it was fake news, but I panicked and believed it,” and “The information reinforced concerns I had already been worried about on a daily basis, so I accepted it without questioning whether it was true.”

Especially when information is confusing and in the midst of uncertain circumstances, as is often the case in the aftermath of a disaster, it may be important to take a moment to consider whether the information you encounter is true or not.



Preparing for Disasters: What to Have Ready

Valuables	¥ Cash ATMs may not be available. Coins for public telephones.	ID ID & Health Insurance Card For procedures at gov. offices and financial institutions.	
Drinks / Food	D Drinks 3 bottles (500mL) per person per day for 3 days	F Food Biscuits, packaged rice, ready-to-eat foods, canned foods, etc.	
Hygiene/ Medical Supplies	T Simple Toilet 5 uses per person per day for 3 days (coagulant + waste bag set)	P Toilet Paper Highly versatile is recommended	
	F First-aid Set Adhesive bandages, bandages, over-the-counter medicines, etc.	T Tooth-brushing Set Rinse-free types are preferable, especially for disease prevention	
	H Wet Wipes Handwashing may not be possible	M Masks & Gloves Debris and dust prevention Infection prevention	
Equipment	E Radio • Batteries Useful for gathering information	R Rain Gear & Emergency Foil Blankets Cold and rain protection	
	B Plastic Bags, Garbage Bags & Plastic Wrap Good as trays & plates substitution	W Whistle & LED Light If trapped in a place Pen-style is convenient	

OFIX Activity Report: Volunteer Activities Supporting Disaster-Affected Areas

On July 27, five foreign residents from China, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, and America participated in a photo cleaning activity organized by “Arai-guma Osaka.”

Photo cleaning is restoring photos that have been damaged and soiled by floods and disasters. It was something that we had never heard of before, but participants were carefully taught each step of the process, from separating the photos and washing them to the final finishing touches. The staff of “Arai-guma” and the volunteers had a great time together.

Most participants were volunteering in Japan for the first time. However, all of them said they would like to volunteer in Japan again in the future.

OFIX will continue to support foreign residents so that they can actively participate and contribute to their local communities.

If you know someone who has been affected by flooding, please share the following information with them.

- Don't throw away film photos damaged by flooding!
- You may be able to clean and restore your precious photos that hold your important memories. “Arai-guma” may be able to help.
- If your photos have been soaked in muddy water, drying them individually can increase the chances of restoring them successfully.





From the Consultation Frontlines: 2018 Osaka Northern Earthquake

Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents (OIS)

During the 2018 Osaka Northern Earthquake, many inquiries received were about how to restore the supply of city gas, which had been shut off for safety reasons. Once they knew the procedure, these inquiries were generally resolved quickly. However, there were reportedly some foreign residents who, unable to ask even their Japanese colleagues, were still taking cold showers a week later. This highlighted a lack of communication in the workplace.

There were also inquiries from foreign residents living alone who had experienced a major earthquake for the first time. They were so anxious that they could not sleep at night and simply wanted someone who spoke their native language to stay with them.

We asked the local international exchange association in the area where the resident lived and received assistance, and a staff member who spoke the resident's native language then visited them in their home.

Foreign residents may have difficulty getting the information they need during disasters due to language barriers and limited connections with the local community. Simply saying, "Let's evacuate together," can help them feel safe and reassured. In times of emergency, we ask everyone in the community to lend a helping hand.



A Quest Around the World: Vietnam



The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia and stretches approximately 1,650 km from north to south. Its capital is Hanoi, while Ho Chi Minh City is its largest commercial city.



Population & Language

The population is about 102 million, making it one of the most populous countries globally. The official language is Vietnamese, with distinctive dialects spoken in the northern, central, and southern regions. Today, there are 54 ethnic groups, preserving a rich diversity of cultures and traditions.



Cuisine

Bánh xèo (バインセオ)



Features: A large bánh xèo is torn into bite-sized pieces by hand and wrapped in fresh Vietnamese vegetables and herbs, such as lettuce, mint, and basil.

Main Ingredients: Rice flour, coconut milk, turmeric, pork, shrimp, bean sprouts, onions, and more.



Culture

The importance of family and respect for elders are deeply rooted in everyday life. One of the charms of Vietnamese culture is the way tradition naturally blends into daily life.

Lunar New Year “Tet” and the Ao Dai.

“Tet,” is the most important celebration of the year. Families come together to wish for good health and happiness in the new year.

The traditional dress, known as the “Ao Dai,” is worn on special occasions such as graduation ceremonies and weddings. It is a symbol of beauty and elegance.

Traditional Performing Art: Water Puppetry

Puppets come to life and perform on the surface of water. This unique traditional art form originated in the rural culture of northern Vietnam.

Reports on Other Projects and Activities

- 8/25 The First Case Conference
- 8/28 Inbound Visitor Consultation Enhancement Project: Second Working
- 9/14 The First Community Interpreter Volunteer Training
- 10/3 Daily Life Orientation Session



Registered Volunteers of OFIX

145 Supporters

553 Language Volunteers

220 Disaster Interpretation and Translation Volunteers

Current status as of October 15, 2026

For more volunteer information, please scan this QR code.



Volunteer



Supporter

Editorial Note

This time, the feature was about disaster preparedness and emergencies. I experienced the 2007 Pisco earthquake in Peru (M 8.0). Although the epicenter was about 145 km south-southeast of Lima, off shore, the shaking was quite strong even in Lima. Ever since that day, I kept my family's passports beside my bed while sleeping until I returned to Japan.

Now, I keep emergency supplies such as portable toilets and water at home as part of a rotating stock system. I'm also considering installing a seismic circuit breaker. What kinds of preparations do you all have in place?

OFIX Sponsor Recruitment

Annual membership: 50,000 yen for corporate members, 3,000 yen for individual members

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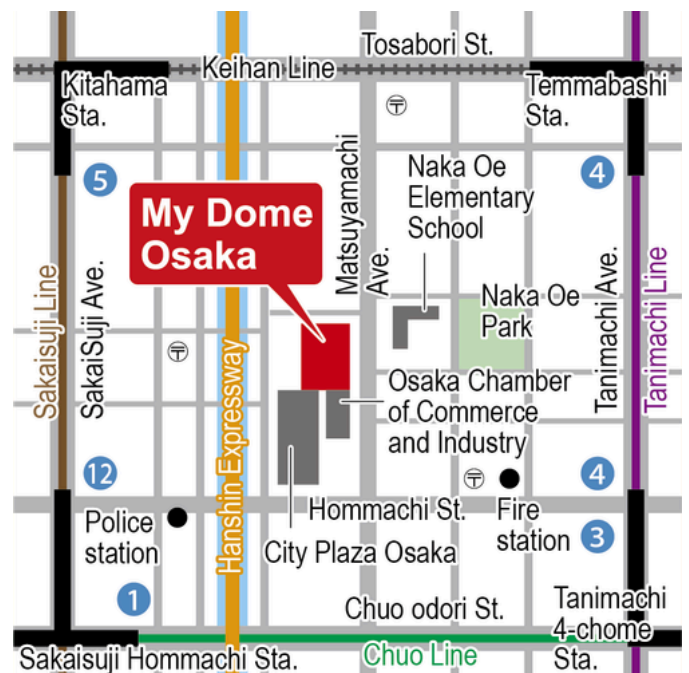
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