

Initiatives to prepare proposed building construction related technical standards

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1. Background

The Building Standard Law stipulates minimum standards to ensure the safety of buildings and prescribes many technical standards concerning all building construction related fields such as structures or fire protection. And in addition to the Building Standard Law, there are other laws such as the Tsunami Disaster Protection Region Establishment Law enacted last year which also stipulate building construction related technical standards.

These building construction related technical standards must be revised as necessary according to progress in survey research and technology development and to disasters trends. Building Standard Provision Promotion Projects have been conducted as projects subsidized by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism as a way to promote related survey research, and as a system to carry out standardization based on its achievements, the National Institute for Land and Infrastructure Management (below, “NILIM”) has operated a system including outside experts since 2011.

2. Building Structure Standards Committee

To achieve the above goals, the Building Structure Standards Committee (Chairman: Professor Kubo Tetsuo, University of Tokyo) was established at the NILIM as an organization to reflect the view of outside experts in technical standards proposals prepared by the Building Department.

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, the building structure field has had to respond quickly to its damage, so this committee was established on April 12, and carried out field surveys of the disaster region on April 21 and 22. Based on this, the committee met for the first time on June 8 to confirm the early reports on surveys of the damage and discuss immediate challenges. It met for the second time in August, when it energetically carried out a study, then at its third meeting in October, it presented and approved the proposal, Provisional Guideline to Structural Conditions Essential for Tsunami

Evacuation Buildings Etc. in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake. Later a notification (Kokujushi No. 2570 of November 17, 2011) was issued by the Housing Bureau, and its contents were reflected in technical standards under the Tsunami Disaster Protection Region Establishment Law.

The committee found extensive damage such as fallen ceilings in large spaces, so it is studying related technical standards.

3. Future plans

In 2011, a standards revision system was operated centered on responses to earthquake disaster damage, but in the future, the revision of technical standards will also be studied in response to the progress of survey research.

In February 2012, the National Institute for Land and Infrastructure Management conducted large-scale fire tests in a wooden three-story school building, and in the future it will establish a committee concerning fire prevention and evacuation in order to study the revision of technical standards related to fire prevention based on the tests.

