

VI. The Next Day: 18 January

A. Nationwide Response

As of 0:45 a.m. on 18 January, the official casualty figures were 1,681 dead, 1,017 missing and 6,334 injured. Based on the first assessment mission, Tokyo ministries and agencies arranged for emergency measures on a sectoral basis. At 02:00 a.m. the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOH) announced the application of the Disaster Relief Law to the affected areas, which would insure a wide distribution of relief items and the provision of medical services. Realizing that the ambulance evacuation of seriously ill patients out of Kobe was not proceeding well, the MOH made a list of emergency hospitals accessible by helicopter in neighboring Osaka, Kyoto, Nagoya, Nara, etc. Electrical engineers were fully mobilized to restore electricity, and the NTT (nationwide telephone company) mobilized its engineers to reinstate telephone services. By 10:12 a.m. the NTT had repaired all the damaged switchboard machines serving the affected area and moved on to reconnect the wiring to existing households.

On 18 January the following teams were conducting relief and rescue activities:

Table 9
Outside Teams on Site as of 18 January

Fire Services	138 search and rescue teams
	130 fire squadrons
	108 ambulance teams
	Total of 1,736 fire service professionals, 387 vehicles and 12 helicopters
Police Teams	mobile police task forces
	special rescue forces (474 professionals)
	Total of 2,169 professionals and 9 police helicopters
Self-Defense Forces	13,000 personnel 800 vehicles and 59 helicopters. Navy vessels
Red Cross	34 Red Cross medical teams (183 professionals)

Volunteers from all over Japan began their activities. Seventeen voluntary teams of firemen came to assist those in Kobe with firefighting and logistics support. AMDA called on its member doctors and nurses in Osaka and Kyoto to assemble in Okayama for a second medical convoy. Enterprises started donating relief materials in large amounts, and private citizens delivered food to evacuation centers.

B. Rescue Activities

With the arrival of fresh rescue teams, search and rescue at most of the major SRC and RC building collapse sites had been carried out by 18 January. Fire service teams rescued 123 people alive and recovered 320 bodies. Self-Defense teams rescued 66 people and found 288 bodies. (Police teams also rescued people but the exact figures are not available.) Still, there remained numerous sites for rescue in the wooden residential areas. The Kobe Fire Command and Hyogo Prefectural Police sounded out for survivors and mapped sites where there were high possibilities that family members were trapped alive.

C. Aftershock Warnings

At 11:00 a.m., the Japan Meteorological Agency issued a press release, pointing out the likelihood of strong aftershocks with a magnitude of up to 6 on the Richter Scale and warning people to take precautions. Rescue workers were warned of secondary disasters and decided not to conduct rescue activities unless there were enough lighting and a secure escape route. Midnight rescue operations were halted. Many evacuees housed in schools next to tilting buildings had to be evacuated again to safer sites to avoid further possible accidents from aftershocks.

D. Distribution of Food and Relief Items

With nationwide assistance, food and relief items were now flowing into the affected areas. Large evacuation centers with access to trunk roads were receiving sufficient food. However, distribution was not adequate for people who had taken refuge in small evacuation centers, private parking lots or communal centers. Some of these small places were still not mapped on local distribution plans, since the evacuees there could not report to local authorities. Also, evacuation centers accessible only by foot could not receive enough food. Due to micro-logistic constraints caused by numerous roadblocks, the level of relief distribution varied. Just 100 meters away from a major evacuation center with enough food, other evacuees were suffering from hunger.

E. Reconstruction Planning Starts

The Hyogo Prefectural Government started to obtain temporary housing for families who had lost their homes. By the end of the day, sites had been chosen for the construction of 3,970 temporary prefabricated public housing units (where those who had lost their houses could stay in an apartment free of charge for one year).