

**Study on Volunteer Fire Corps (*Shobodan*) and Its Role in the  
Process of Community Building  
for Disaster Prevention  
- The Case of Sendai City -**

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## **Chapter 2 Structure and Function of Volunteer Fire Corps**

## 2. Present Condition of Organization of Volunteer Fire Corps

In the case of Sendai City, the Volunteer Fire Corps organization consists of 7 corps, according to 7 wards in Sendai, which are Aoba-ward, Miyagino-ward, Wakabayashi-ward, Taihaku-ward, Izumi-ward, Miyagi-ward, and Akiu-ward. Each has its own main office. Furthermore, sub-corps are set-up under each corps which reaches the total number of 57 sub-corps in Sendai city. Each main office has three divisions, which are division of general affairs, division of fire/disaster prevention, and division of inspection. While each sub-corps has five units, which are general affairs unit, fire/disaster prevention unit, fire fighting unit, flood protection unit, and citizens relief unit. Member of Fire

Volunteer Corps can be classified in full-time officer (member) and part-time officer (member). Whereas in the case of Sendai city, all members are part-time members. There are seven rank of memberships, leader of corps (*Dan-chō*), vice-leader of corps (*Fukudan-chō*), leader of sub-corps (*Bundan-chō*), vice-leader of sub-corps (*Fuku Bundan-chō*), unit leader (*Bu-chō*), group leader (*Han-chō*), and member (*Dan-in*).

At present, the Volunteer Fire Corps of Sendai city is facing the problem of declining number of member and shortage of successors for the corps. To eliminate these problems, the treatment towards member is to be improved, while the schedule for activities is to be changed from weekdays to weekends. In regard of the shortage of successors for the corps, this problem has been growing as a serious problem, since the average age of member of the corps is elevating and the number of younger people to become member of the corps is declining. For the solution of the problem, apart from two objective efforts mentioned above, the Volunteer Fire Corps needs to improve its 'old-fashioned, and isolated' image, and try to form image which appeals to younger generation.