

## **68% of firms handling decontamination in Fukushima violated labor laws**

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FUKUSHIMA — Sixty-eight percent of firms engaged in decontamination work in Fukushima Prefecture in the wake of the prefecture's nuclear disaster were found to have violated labor-related laws during a recent survey, the Fukushima Labor Bureau said.

The bureau announced July 24 that it has already instructed those companies to rectify their conduct. The bureau investigated 388 Fukushima workplaces between January and June this year, mainly through snap inspections, and confirmed a total of 684 violations at 264 offices, officials said.

Seventy percent of the misconduct involved violations of the Labor Standards Act, including 108 cases of unpaid overtime, 90 cases of undocumented payrolls and 82 cases of failure to present working conditions.

The remaining 30 percent involved violations of the Industrial Safety and Health Act. Failure to conduct research on radiation dosages prior to decontamination work was reported in 20 cases, followed by 16 cases of failure to provide workers with proper education on radiation and 14 cases of failure to monitor radioactive contamination levels after decontamination work had finished.

In addition, the bureau discovered 12 cases in which the special daily allowance for decontamination work (around 10,000 yen) had not been paid, and reported these cases to the Ministry of the Environment.

The bureau conducted a similar investigation between April and December last year, targeting 242 firms, and discovered that 45 percent were violating the laws. Officials attributed the large increase this time to the fact that more items had been added to the inspection list.

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\* Mainichi Shimbun, July 26, 2013

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