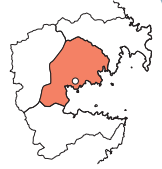


Information is not delivered Information is not conveyed

Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters



▲Elevated railroad tracks filled with debris.

Photo courtesy of Minamisanriku Social Welfare Council

Media reported that “immediately after the earthquake, 10,000 townspeople could not be contacted,” residents were filled with anxiety regarding the well-being of family and acquaintances. Essential information was unavailable, the only news that could be accessed both inside and outside the prefecture was from portable radios.

Telecommunications infrastructure such as telephones, cellular phones, and the internet were rendered inoperable due to the destruction of antennas and cables.

The information reaching the Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters was hours old, usually delivered by people who had walked over the debris from what had previously been a few minutes’ drive. Municipal employees were relieved to learn that busses transporting children to and from school were safe and that although residents were isolated in many places without food, they were pulling together to survive.

Because information was unable to be transmitted, it was impossible to gather as much information about the disaster as needed. Procuring supplies, giving instructions, protecting and reporting on the status of survivors was impossible. All means of preserving survivor's lives was lost.