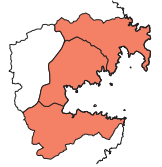


If We Don't Do It, Who Will? Construction company workers



▲ From the day after the earthquake, heavy machinery owned by local construction companies was a constant sight in rubble-filled Minamisanriku.

Photo courtesy of Abefuji Construction

In a Minamisanriku reduced to rubble, those who took immediate action were the employees of local construction companies. Although many of the town's construction companies were afflicted by the disaster, their staff took it upon themselves to mobilize heavy machinery that had been left on high ground and was consequently still in working order.

Without making urgent repairs to roads that could be used by the emergency and rescue vehicles that were expected in the coming days, it would have been impossible to rescue people who were still alive. The construction company employees who got to work straight after the tsunami included individuals who took on this task while still unsure of the safety of their own family members.

None of the workers had any experience in clearing roads blocked by wreckage, which included buildings that had been destroyed by the tsunami. Great care was required in doing the work due to the possibility of victims lying stuck under the rubble. However, who would have performed this task had these men not taken it on? Their professionalism and sense of purpose drove them forward.

The construction and maintenance of the town's roads and waterways had been the regular work of local construction companies, so their employees considered it their responsibility to protect such infrastructure from disasters even though it was a thankless task. These men took it upon themselves to work day after day on the front lines of the disaster.