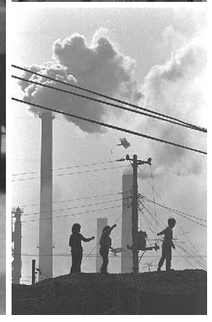
08 Pollution in the city

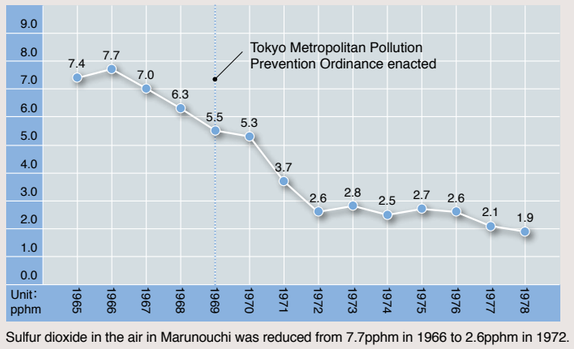
From the late 1960s, serious pollution issues arose throughout the country, such as Niigata Minamata disease, Yokkaichi asthma, and Toyama itai-itai disease. Although measures were taken to address these problems such as enactment of the Basic Act for Environmental Pollution Control and various legislation for individual areas, difficulty was encountered in curbing pollution.

Tokyo faced problems such as air pollution from pollutants such as sulfur dioxide emitted from factories and buildings and carbon monoxide from vehicle exhaust, as well as river and ocean pollution. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government made it clear that it needed to take its own measures to fight this problem, and in July 1969, three existing ordinances relating to pollution were combined for enactment of the Tokyo Metropolitan Pollution Prevention Ordinance to systematically develop administrative measures to address pollution.

This enactment of the ordinance served as the frontrunner for comprehensive pollution control legislation by local governments, and had a major impact on many local governments in their formulation of ordinances regulating pollution, as well as the national government's amendment and enactment of laws.



Air pollution in the city (late 1960s)
There were frequent outbreaks of smog from air pollution involving pollutants such as sulfur dioxide emitted from factories and buildings and carbon monoxide from vehicle exhaust.
Sources: (left) Tokyo Metropolitan Government official photo archives; (right) Bureau of Environment, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

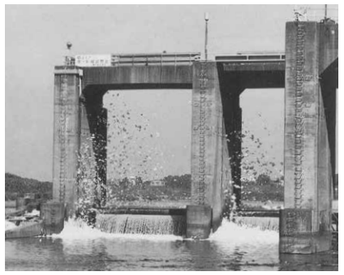


Sulfur dioxide in the air in Marunouchi was reduced from 7.7pphm in 1966 to 2.6pphm in 1972.

Change over the years in annual average figures for sulfur dioxide in the air in the ward area (Chiyoda-ku)
The Tokyo Metropolitan Pollution Prevention Ordinance served to improve environmental problems by leading many local governments that had the same problems. After the enactment of the ordinance, sulfur dioxide in the air in Marunouchi was reduced from 7.7pphm in 1966 to 2.6pphm in 1972 (1pphm=0.0001%).
Prepared from "Change in Air Pollutants." Bureau of Environment, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Photochemical smog signboard in the 1970s on a street in Tokyo

Cars and air pollution
In place of industrial pollution, a new form of pollution also appeared in Tokyo. It was discovered that major causes of photochemical smog were rising oxidant concentrations and nitrogen oxides from vehicular exhaust gas. With the increase in owned automobiles in the city, an important challenge to address became measures against this pollution, along with those to deal with noise and vibration along major roads. And so in 1970 the Tokyo Metropolitan Pollution Prevention Ordinance was significantly amended, centering on policies to deal with air pollution.
Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government official photo archives.



Increasingly polluted Tama River (1970)
Pollution of major rivers in Tokyo was improved through the metropolitan government's waste water regulations and improvements in the sewer system. On the other hand, pollution in the middle reaches of the Tama River and some middle- to small-sized rivers continued, and it still remained difficult to achieve environmental standards.
Source: *Tokyo tosei 50 nen shi* (50 year history of Tokyo Metropolitan Government affairs). Office of Policy Planning, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

The no longer existing Sanya-bori Canal (Nihonzutsumi, Taito-ku)
The photo shows a short, 700-meter canal linking the Nihonzutsumi Pumping Station and Sumida River.
Source: Bureau of Environment, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

Resurrection of the Sumida River fireworks (1978)
Source: Bureau of Sewerage, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

With post-war economic growth, Sumida River became increasingly polluted, resulting in cancellation of the fireworks event from 1961. Stakeholders worked together to clean up Sumida River, including development of sewers mainly in basins receiving factory wastewater, and were able to significantly improve water quality.

Spread of water supply systems

◉ From the 1960s to early 70s, from reasons including the concentration of industry and population in the National Capital Region due to high economic growth, the volume of water supplied increased year on year by 200,000 to 300,000 cubic meters a day. The first Tone River System Waterworks Expansion Project was launched in 1963 in order to build facilities that can accept water generated through development of water source facilities, treat and purify the water, and distribute it. Developments continued to be advanced through the second to fourth projects that followed.

◉ The first to third Tone River System Waterworks Expansion Projects expanded the Kanamachi and Higashi-Murayama purification plants and built the Asaka, Ozaku, and Misono purification plants. The projects were completed in 1976 with facility capacity bolstered to 3.8 million cubic meters a day, and water conveyance, transmission and distribution facilities developed. The fourth Tone River System Waterworks Expansion Project was launched in 1972 and the first phase of construction of the Misato Purification Plant, a key facility of the project, was completed in 1985 to provide capacity of 550,000㎥/day.

◉ The Tokyo Metropolitan Government was able to achieve 100 percent access to water supply service in 1988 through such expansion of facilities that could meet the rapidly increasing demands for water supply arising from the city's growth.

Asaka Purification Plant receiving well
Receiving well of this large-scale water purification plant that came into service in 1966 as part of the first Tone River System Waterworks Expansion Project.
Source: Bureau of Waterworks, Tokyo Metropolitan Government.