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Japan logs record cases of ambulances struggling to find hospitals



Japan reported a record number of weekly cases of ambulances struggling to find a hospital for patients in the week through Sunday, hitting a high for a third straight week, as the country grapples with a surge in COVID-19 infections, the government said Tuesday.

The number of cases logged from Aug. 8 to 14 increased by 2% from the previous week to 6,747, of which 2,836 involved patients with respiratory difficulties, among other symptoms, and suspected of having COVID-19, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency.

The data comes the same day Japan reported 311 daily coronavirus deaths (<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/08/16/national/covid-deaths/>), its second highest toll following the 327 fatalities registered on Feb. 22 this year.

Ambulance cases involving suspected coronavirus patients declined by 1% from the previous week, according to the agency.

The total number of incidents, tallied across 52 fire departments including those in prefectural capitals, has been on the rise for eight consecutive weeks.

The record number of ambulance cases in the week through Sunday, meanwhile, is believed to have been caused by COVID-19 cases, which number remains high nationwide, and a lack of open facilities during the Bon summer holidays.

The numbers comprise cases in which ambulance crew ask facilities for patient acceptance over four times, with over 30 minutes from when the crew arrive to when the ambulance begins transporting the patient.

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