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Chinese workers seek more in Apple supplier's plant poison case

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Feb 25 (Reuters) - A Taiwan-owned plant making parts for Apple Inc said it is offering around 80,000 yuan (\$12,177) as compensation to each of the 115 workers hit by chemical poisoning but some of the affected Chinese workers said the sum was not enough.

Wintek, owner of the factory in east China's Suzhou industrial park, said it has reserved 10 million yuan for compensation to the workers affected by the chemical hexyl hydride, and will pay more if the illness continues.

But two workers contacted by Reuters on Friday said that the 80,000 yuan offered by the company to each worker so far was not sufficient.

"Don't tell me 80,000 yuan, even 800,000 yuan will not be enough," said Hu Zhiyong, a 26-year-old worker.

Hu, who said his daily medical expenses are over 800 yuan, added that his major demand is future health care after he leaves the company, as well as an apology from Apple.

Reuters reported earlier this week that some of the workers had sent a letter to Apple CEO Steve Jobs, urging the company to help address their grievances.

Wintek has said it used hexyl hydride, also called n-hexane, from May 2008 to August 2009, but stopped after discovering it was making workers ill.

The company used the chemical, which evaporates faster than alcohol, to speed up production. It has gone back to using alcohol.

"We have accrued all liabilities," said Wintek's finance director, Jay Huang, on Friday. "If they discover any continued illness in the future, we will compensate as required by law."

The company has set aside the 10 million yuan as a provision.

According to Wintek, 91 workers have finished assessments on their health condition and 24 are still in the process of being assessed, and it estimates each will get around 80,000 yuan in compensation.

Another 22 have been cleared of any poisoning.

Hu said Wintek will bear all legal responsibilities and compensate affected workers even after they leave the company if they are diagnosed with continued illness.

Li Wanxin, a 19-year-old worker, said the company has initially offered her 2,223 yuan in compensation: 1,500 yuan for medical expenses and 723 yuan as a living allowance. She said this was sufficient for now but wants more.

Li said she has yet to receive the money because she needs to complete a final check-up required under labour laws to ascertain that she was indeed affected by poisoning while working at the plant. ([\\$1=6.57 Yuan ↗](#)) (Reporting by Clare Jim in Taipei and Suilee Wee in Beijing; Editing by Muralikumar Anantharaman)

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