

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Gov't checking if mail from Japan a potential radiation 'danger'

By April Lim, For Postmedia News April 13, 2011

A worker wearing a protective suit points at a cracked concrete pit near its No. 2 reactor of the Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima prefecture on April 2.

Photograph by: Tokyo Electric Power, Handout/Reuters

Labour Canada is looking into whether mail from Japan is a "danger" to Canada Post employees, after a Ontario postal officer refused to handle incoming mail from the earthquake-torn country.

The refusal took place about 1 1/2 weeks ago at Mississauga's Gateway Postal Facility outside of Toronto, after the quake and subsequent tsunami crippled the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in northeastern Japan.

At that time, the U.S. postal service issued a media release saying that small amounts of radiation had been detected at several of their postal plants with mail arriving from Japan, said the national vice-president of the Customs and Immigration Union, Jason McMichael.

Labour Canada has been investigating for over a week "to decide if examining this mail constitutes a danger," McMichael said.

The officer, whose name McMichael said he cannot reveal, asked the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) if he could use the radiation detection equipment that he is trained to use and is available on site at the facility, but the CBSA declined his request. As a result, the officer invoked his right under the labour codes to refuse dangerous work.

"The equipment is there, they're just not being able to use it because the CBSA is counting on Health Canada's determination that the mail is arriving is safe and that there's no danger to Canadians who might be handling it," said McMichael.

"We're asking the CBSA (to) err on the side of caution and allow us to scan them for radiation," said McMichael.

He said it is extremely rare for Labour Canada to wait this long, though he said he suspects a decision from Labour Canada will be announced shortly.

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2. Postal Service Initiates ePacket Service with Hongkong Post

HONG KONG (MMD Newswire) April 20, 2011 -- The U.S. Postal Service has initiated a new service with Hongkong Post that is structured to foster growth in e-commerce. The new ePacket service expands the array of options offered to e-commerce merchants in Hong Kong seeking to reach consumer markets in the United States. The ePacket shipping solution features tracking and Delivery Confirmation in the Postal Service network for lightweight goods and merchandise ordered by consumers in the United States from merchants in Hong Kong.

ePacket service offers consumers in the U.S. and e-commerce merchants in Hong Kong with in-process scanning information and Delivery Confirmation notification available through Hongkong Post's tracking system and through Track and Confirm at usps.com.

Merchants selecting the shipping solution through Hongkong Post are now able to ship small packages weighing up to two kilograms (4.4 pounds) using co-branded shipping labels. Upon arrival in the United States, these packages receive First-Class Mail service with Delivery Confirmation service.

"This agreement offers visibility previously unavailable in the small packet segment between Hongkong Post and the Postal Service," said Paul Vogel, president and chief marketing/sales officer. "It shows the Postal Service has the flexibility to develop service options to meet market demand from businesses around the world. Further, it solidifies our role as a key supplier in global commerce."

Hongkong Post's agreement with the Postal Service includes jointly developed data-rich shipping labels integrated with barcoding technology readable by both Hongkong Post and the Postal Service, along with logistics planning and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) information exchanges.

Joining Vogel today for a ceremony to formalize the agreement were Eddie Mak, deputy postmaster general, Hongkong Post; and Jeff Liao, CEO, eBay Greater China, South East Asia and Japan.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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