

# International Appeal—Solidarity support for Chinese GP Workers now!

Tuesday 12 September 2006, by [Hong Kong Coalition on GP Cadmium Incident](#) (Date first published: 8 September 2006).

## **GP workers need your support before/on Sept 13!**

Dear friends of the international civil society:

We would like you to join our action against the injustice of a HK Company called GP Battery Ltd. We will have action against GP

### 1. September 13

24 hour Action : Sept 13-14

3pm at the entrance of the venue of the GP Shareholder Meeting iXProtest against GP not to pay fair and decent compensation to workers.

Major demands:

- 1) Gold Peak should immediately provide the affected workers fair and decent compensation;
- 2) Gold Peak should stop the humiliating body-checks and provide recognized and professional medical checkups to its workers;
- 3) Gold Peak should stop threatening its workers and apologise for any harassment, injustice and discrimination directed at them. It should undertake to effect genuine negotiations with the workers involved.
- 4) Gold Peak should withdraw its legal action against the three Hong Kong groups.

### 2. September 14<sup>th</sup>

For security reason, the actual action will be announced later.

What you can do to support the GP workers?

We are calling for a Global Solidarity Action Day for GP workers on September 13 (GP AGM). If you can do some action on that day, the GP workers will thank very much for your support.

1. You can send email or fax a protest letter (sample below) to GP or to GP member companies (below).
2. Visit a store which sell GP Batteries and tell the consumers how GP treats their workers in China.

Note: The three organization : Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

(HKCTU), Globalisation Monitor (GM) and Neighbourhood and Workers' Service Centre are sued by the GP at the moment. The lawyers who defend for the three groups suggest them not to be directly involved in the current solidarity campaign. We are sending the international appeal and ask your support for them.

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on behalf of the Hong Kong Coalition on GP Cadmium Incident

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More English materials on GP Cadmium Incident

<http://globalmonitor.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.csr-asia.com/index.php?p=5006>

Useful links about GP:

GP Board of Directors and Senior management

<http://www.goldpeak.com/Frame/profile/management.htm>

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## **Sample Protest Letter**

Chairman and CEO

Gold Peak Industries (Holdings) Limited (GP)

8/F Gold Peak Building, 30 Kwai Wing Road

W Kwai Chung, Hong Kong SAR

Fax: (852) 2489 1879

E-mail: [gp@goldpeak.com](mailto:gp@goldpeak.com)

8 September 2006

Dear Mr. Lo Chung Wing and Gold Peak shareholders

Compensation for excessive cadmium levels and cadmium poisoning

We understand that on the 13<sup>th</sup> September Gold Peak Industries will be holding its AGM in Hong Kong. We wish to take this opportunity to address the AGM in order to express our support for the struggle of workers from several of your company's factories in China to gain adequate compensation and redress for excessive cadmium levels and cadmium poisoning contracted while at work for Gold Peak Industrial Holding Ltd (hereafter GP).

We are also writing to express our dismay at the commencement of legal action you have taken against three Hong Kong groups --- Globalisation Monitor, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions and the Neighbourhood and Workers' Service Centre ---for their support of the workers' effort in making their case heard. We deplore the use of threatening legal action to silence the

legitimate support the groups are showing to these workers.

According to many reports, some 400 workers from at least three factories - two located in Huizhou and one in Shenzhen, all in Guangdong province - have been found to have excessive cadmium levels while 10 workers have already been diagnosed as having cadmium poisoning. Numerous statements show that there have been poor levels of occupational health and safety training, education and safeguards in GP factories producing cadmium batteries in the mainland. Several dozen GP workers have indeed already been hospitalised due to exposure to cadmium. The fact that 3 workers of a GP plant in Hong Kong have also been certified as cadmium poisoning and 21 with excessive cadmium level reflects the seriousness of the substandard occupational protection of GP Batteries.

In addition to this, GP workers (mostly women) have been ordered to undress and take showers under the surveillance of unidentified persons when they took urine samples for medical check up as required by laws. Since GP batteries plants are responsible to make all arrangement, the GP workers have suspected GP management's involvement in this insulting arrangement. We understand that it is not the first time that GP workers are denied basic human rights. In September 2004, Gold Peak and the local Chinese government authority alleged that workers, who attempted to complain about the case to central authority in Beijing, could be held responsible for "criminal responsibilities". We are also extremely concerned at reports that GP has sub-contracted cadmium-nickel battery production to another location in Hunan which reportedly has substandard health and safety measures.

The compensation fund established in August 2005 has so far been inadequate in providing assistance to the affected workers - according to GP's own statements; only four percent of the 400 workers affected have so far received funds. In November 2005, workers from GP's Xianjin and Chaoba factories presented a letter to the GP Fund board managers. The letter included a number of clear and reasonable demands: medical checks for the children of female workers who had come into contact with cadmium, past, current and future medical costs of the workers, the issue of future employment and assistance for the difficult financial circumstances that most of the affected workers now find themselves in.

We remain committed to ensuring justice for the workers and call for the following:

- 1) Gold Peak should immediately provide the affected workers fair and decent compensation;
- 2) Gold Peak should stop the humiliating body-checks and provide recognized and professional medical checkups to its workers;
- 3) Gold Peak should stop threatening its workers and apologise for any harassment, injustice and discrimination directed at them. It should undertake to effect genuine negotiations with the workers involved.
- 4) Gold Peak should withdraw its legal action against the three Hong Kong groups.

Yours sincerely,

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Gold Peak Holdings

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Listed member companies in Singapore  
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Trading and Marketing Offices  
GP Batteries' major production facilities are located in Hong Kong, China, Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia, supported by marketing and trading offices in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Poland, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Russia, Sweden, the Netherlands, the UK, Canada and the US.

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## **Chronological Table of GP Incident — Chaoba, Xianjin and Jieba plants**

### *2003 October & December*

Two GP factory workers found in their blood tests that they were infected with excessive cadmium. The workers at the powder room fell into panic. Workers collectively slowed down.

2003.12.3 & 2004.2.24

GP factory arranged the doctors from Guangdong Hospital for Treatment and Prevention of Occupational Diseases (GD OSH Hospital) to the factory and drew blood tests and some with serious excess of cadmium were sent to hospital.

2004 May

Until May, around 50 workers in the assembly department paid their own expenses to get medical examination and most of them are infected with excessive cadmium. The factory did not give the acknowledgement and rejected worker's demand for medical examination. Some workers complained to the governments of Guangdong Province and Huizhou.

5.24 Factory management arranged 540 assembly workers in batches to undergo blood tests but did not announce the result.

6.9 Assembly line workers went on strike. Factory management distributed a small piece of paper to workers and offered to send five workers to a hospital each time.

Xianjin plant was forced to promise medical examination for all assembly line workers.

6.12<sup>00</sup> 18 In order to get the original blood test report, the workers went on strike again. However, the result they got was much lower than the one they paid by themselves. The factory said that urinary cadmium test was valid but only arranged 121 workers for urinary test. Workers continue to send representatives to petition.

Through government intervention, 106 workers were accepted by a hospital in Huizhou. 22 workers with more serious conditions were sent to GD OSH Hospital.

In June, the factory launched massive recruitment and workers were asked to have medical check up before getting the job.

6.21 450 Xianjin assembly line workers had blood tests and more than 130 were diagnosed with excessive cadmium.

6.29 GP factory forced four workers to be discharged from hospital.

Xianjin plant only passed a small piece of paper (blood test report) to workers. Workers went on strike again and blocked the road and demanded improvement of working environment. The factory stopped all production.

7.2 Some workers at the GD OSH Hospital were discharged.

7.3 Hong Kong media exposed the incident which caused public concern for GPworkers.

7.5 22 workers are “normally” discharged.

7.6 GP advertised in newspapers and denied the workers’ allegations.

7.9 Guangzhou: with the support of GP factory and Huizhou government officials, 7 workers were discharged.

Huizhou: 63 out of 106 ex-GP workers were discharged but GP plant urged most of the workers to be discharged.

7.10 One of the 7 workers, unwilling to be discharged, left a note behind and disappeared.

7.9 to mid-July Workers at GP and ABT are categorized as “Objects of observation” were discharged.

7.15 More than 110 Xianjin factory workers’ urine test result showed excessive cadmium and they were sent to the hospital.

59 discharged GP workers began negotiation with the factory.

7.20 Workers who had left the plants pay their own fees to get medical examination in Guangzhou and found themselves infected with excessive cadmium.

7.22 Greenpeace investigated cadmium contamination in Huizhou

7.23 More than 30 groups with about 40 activists in Hong Kong protested at the GP headquarter in HK

7.29 The second batch, 140 workers with excessive cadmium, of Xianjin plant was hospitalized and they were discharged on 8.11.

8.2 2 workers obtained the recognition of mild cadmium poisoning diagnosis.

8.3 Huizhou government held a media conference and made a commitment.

8.9 In a meeting organized by GD OSH Hospital, GP and the government, a proposal for 59 workers with high level cadmium was offered: 8,000 Yuan for workers under observation, 3,000 Yuan for those with excessive cadmium level. The company stated that this interim payment could be canceled at any time and workers have to accept the offer within 15 days.

Another six Chaoba plant workers were also discharged but they refused. Among them, one worker left and missing.

8.11 CCTV “Saying Today” showed “Who Will Protect the other half of our Life?”  
Globalization Monitor published their August 2004 issue on “Sweat Battery Event”.

8.13°™ 15 Until mid-August, more than 200 workers have received medical examination and among



them, 177 certified with excessive cadmium and 2 with chronic poisoning.

8.17 Aug 18, 27 resigned workers sent two representatives to the factory but they were driven out of factory. In the afternoon, they then went to Huizhou Economic and Trade Bureau and filed a complaint.

ABT plant workers organized a rally. The government then held a meeting to reply the questions posed by workers.

8.26 28 workers petitioned in Beijing and return to Huizhou on September 2.

9.1 HK Polytechnic U students put up posters and criticized Mr. Victor Lo, President of the board of directors of Poly U.

9.2 September, ABT factory canceled the contract with workers.

9.3 A new proposal was made by GP, but it only added in one point: Workers who were diagnosed with excessive cadmium but not treated as "Objects of Observation" would get extra medical subsidies which were equivalent to six month of their wages.

9.8 Mid-August, 140 workers found with excessive cadmium. But the factory still has more than 500 experienced workers who had been working for more than 5 years.

However, most of their blood tests and urine tests in June and July did not exceed the cadmium level. They demanded re-examination.

9.8<sup>o</sup>™ 11 The worker went on strike and prevented the factory to deliver goods. They take turn to do the duty at night. Finally the factory was compelled to agree with the worker to have medical examination.

9.11 Hong Kong groups protested against GP in HK.

Greenpeace went to Huizhou again & surveyed the drainage situation of Meihu Industrial Zone. October 3, the report was publicized.

9.22 CEO Victor Lo admitted for first time: the careless management caused the incident and GP would set up a Fund.

Starting from October Until June 2005, more workers have been discharged and they signed the new proposal.

10.19 In October, the factory held a meeting. 128 attendants are the second batch of workers with excessive cadmium. However, the re-examination after 10 days, only around 35 workers exceeded the level. Workers questioned the validity of the results.

10.26 October 25<sup>th</sup>, the Chongqing TV Station broadcasted "Huizhou Cadmium Excessive Incident".

November Hong Kong media exposed workers with excessive cadmium and poisoning incident of Shenzhen Jieba. Mainland newspaper also reported the incident at the end of Nov.

End of Dec. 65 GP and ABT workers filed a lawsuit against GP.

2005

1.18 China Youth Daily published: "Getting an Accurate Diagnosis of the Occupational Hazards is

Really Difficult!" Report on Jieba Incident.

2.1 Workers who stayed at GD OSH Hospital signed an agreement & were discharged.

3.18 Court proceeding of the first batch of GP workers started.

5.18 Second court proceeding of the first batch of GP workers.

5.19 Mayor of Huizhou Liu Jinzhou met with GP CEO Victor Lo and Chuang Siu-leung

6.24 The first batch of GP workers lost the proceeding.

July, Jieba moved the nickel-cadmium battery production machinery to Hunan.

8.16 The first batch of GP workers got the verdict.

9.6 Court proceeding of the second batch of GP workers started.

10.11 October, Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of HKSAR government, appointed Victor Lo as a new member of the Executive Council.

Dec GP workers (mostly women) were ordered to undress and took showers under the surveillance of unidentified persons when they were having their annual medical check up taking urine samples as required by laws.

2006 1.19 Four GP workers came to HK to protest against GP

3.24 Five GP workers, with local groups support, demonstrated against Mr. Victor Lo when he attended the board meeting of the University of HK Polytechnic.

4.21 HK groups protested GP when it held its special general meeting

6.28 GP sued three HK groups for 'defamation'.