



Battery Plant Boss Detained for Lead Poisoning

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The legal representative for a battery plant in east China's Zhejiang Province was detained Monday after more than 300 people, including 99 children, were found to have elevated levels of lead in their blood.

Investigations found that the metal was improperly disposed of by the Zhejiang Haijiu Battery Co. in Deqing County, said a spokesman with the county government.

Meanwhile, eight officials from the local government, the environmental protection bureau and the health bureau are being investigated as lax supervision has also been blamed for the poisonings, according to the spokesman.

More than 2,000 people have received blood tests since May 1, and 332 of them, including 99 children, were found to have excessive amounts of lead in their blood.

So far, 53 people, including 27 children, have been hospitalized, he said.

Excessive amounts of lead in the blood can damage the digestive, nervous, and reproductive systems and cause stomachaches, anemia and convulsions.

Authorities have ordered a thorough safety check for all 273 battery factories in Zhejiang.

Haijiu Battery Co., Ltd., founded in May, 2003, mainly produces lead-acid batteries for motorcycles. It has about 1,000 employees and an annual output of 9 million batteries.