

China urges factory safety after iPad plant blast

May 25 2011, By JOE McDONALD , AP Business Writer

(AP) -- Beijing urged Foxconn Technology Group and other Taiwanese companies on Wednesday to ensure safety in their mainland China factories after a fatal blast at a facility that makes Apple iPads.

Last Friday's explosion at the facility owned by Foxconn, Apple's main manufacturing contractor, killed three employees. Foxconn blamed combustible dust in a workshop that polishes [products](#) and suspended production at the factory in the western city of Chengdu, prompting questions about whether supplies of the popular iPad 2 might be disrupted.

"We hope Foxconn and other Taiwan-invested enterprises can learn from this, carry out their safety responsibilities, strengthen internal inspection and management, root out hidden dangers in a timely way and ensure safe production," said Fan Liqing, a spokesman for Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office.

Taiwanese companies have invested billions of dollars in the mainland despite their government's lack of formal ties with Beijing, which claims the self-ruled island as part of its territory.

Fan said the Chengdu explosion was believed to be a "production [safety](#) incident" but gave no details.

Foxconn, a unit of Taiwan's Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., manufactures mobile phones, computers and other products under

contract for Apple Inc. and other [global brands](#) such as Hewlett Packard Inc. The company employs an estimated 1 million to 1.1 million people in China at a series of huge factory campuses.

Other Taiwanese-owned factories in China producing clothing, toys and other goods employ millions more. They are moving into higher-value electronics, [computer chips](#) and other products.

Foxconn produces the iPad 2 in Chengdu and at its flagship [China](#) manufacturing campus in Shenzhen, near Hong Kong.

The company has not said how [iPad](#) 2 production might be affected, but research firm IHS iSuppli said lost output might total 500,000 units at a time when Apple says it is struggling to keep up with strong demand.

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