

Lockington, Elliott (SPAC/PSPC)

From: Kim, Sabrina <Sabrina.Kim@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Sent: March 24, 2020 5:48 PM
To: Murdock, Kelly (SPAC/PSPC); Laycock, Tristan (SPAC/PSPC)
Subject: AP on Malaysia vinyl glove issues

Hi there – just flaggin’ this new piece from AP re vinyl glove issues in Malaysia. I think your office mentioned there were some delays with an order we had. Not sure if it was from Malaysia but just sharing for awareness:

[Key medical glove factories cutting staff 50% amid virus](#)

By JULIET LINDERMAN and MARTHA MENDOZA

an hour ago

Malaysia’s medical glove factories, which make most of the world’s critical hand protection, are operating at half capacity just when they’re most needed, The Associated Press has learned.

[...]

Malaysia is by far the world’s largest medical glove supplier, producing as many as three out of four gloves on market. The industry has a history of mistreating migrant workers who toil over hand-sized molds as they’re dipped in melted latex or rubber, hot and exhausting work.

The Malaysian government ordered factories to halt all manufacturing starting March 18. Then, one by one, those that make products deemed essential, including medical gloves, have been required to seek exemptions to reopen, but only with half of their workforce to reduce the risk of transmitting the new virus, according to industry reports and insider sources. The government says companies must meet domestic demand before exporting anything. The Malaysian Rubber Glove Manufacturers Association this week is asking for an exception.

“Any halt to the production and administrative segments of our industry would mean an absolute stoppage to glove manufacturing and it will be disastrous to the world,” said association president Denis Low in a statement released to Malaysian media. He said their members have received requests for millions of gloves from about 190 countries.

U.S. imports of medical gloves were already 10% lower last month than during the same period last year, according to trade data compiled by Panjiva and ImportGenius. Experts say greater declines are expected in coming weeks. Other countries making gloves including Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Turkey and especially China are also seeing their manufacturing disrupted due to the virus.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced Tuesday it was lifting a block on imports from one leading Malaysian medical glove manufacturer, WRP Asia Pacific, where workers had allegedly been forced to pay recruitment fees as high as \$5,000 in their home countries, including Bangladesh and Nepal.

[...] In response, the FDA is advising medical providers whose stocks are dwindling or already gone: don’t change gloves between patients who have the same infectious disease, or use food grade gloves.

Even with adequate supplies, the agency said that under present circumstances: “Reserve use of sterile gloves for procedures in which sterility is required.”

Last week an Italian doctor died after testing positive for novel coronavirus. In one of his last interviews, he told broadcaster Euronews he had had to treat patients without gloves.

“They have run out,” he said.

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