

Collective Employees of Freeport Container Port

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April 16, 2010

Freeport Container Port (FCP)
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HPH Headquarters
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Kwai Chung, Hong Kong

Via Facsimile: 852-2480-4765

Dear Sirs/Madams:

We the employees of Freeport Container Port are proud of what has been accomplished by the Bahamian workforce as partners with Freeport Container Port, since the inception of Freeport Container Port and the part we the employees have personally played in its success so far.

The future of Freeport Container Port lies in the hands of the employees and we hope that we can count on the continued support of you the stakeholders and management in assisting us in our goal of making and maintaining Freeport Container Port as the number one (#1) port along the Eastern Seaboard of North America and in the Caribbean region.

This communication now comes to you as a result of the recent incident of adverse weather that affected Freeport Container Port, resulting in the loss of three of our colleagues and injuries being sustained by others. It is in light of this event, that previously communicated concerns about safety and by extension work related conditions that we feel has been ignored. It is now the collective intent to now engage you seeking favourable results to these previous requests. It is in the humble opinion that to date, you the management lack credibility in resolving the myriad of issues that have been communicated to them about safety and personnel.

The employees at Freeport Container Port has now developed a lack of trust and confidence in the abilities of the management team to conduct a safe operation.

This break down in communication between the employees of and management at Freeport Container Port needs to be addressed in a more serious manner than the causal attitude that seems to permeate from the collective management of this facility, as to avoid further adverse conditions that could result in further injuries or death to the employees.

This results in the unsafe nonchalant attitude of the management team of Freeport Container Port thru conversations now seems to have even filtered out into the local, national and international community.

We are aware of the serious impact that any form of work stoppage can have on the financial results of Freeport Container Port. It must be immediately made known that it is not the employees intent to seek to engage in any act that would hinder the progression and enhancement of Freeport Container Port without first seeking to resolve any and all issues thru direct negotiation.

It is known that container ports facilities facilitates some of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Therefore the safety and well being of all staff should be paramount at all container port facilities to ensure a balance and stable growth environment.

The current activities at Freeport Container Port, with an average of over 100 employees each day, does not seem in the eyes of us the employees to reflect safety or employee moral as a priority.

With a huge number of incidents, accident, injuries and now deaths that has occurred over the years at this facility, we the employees, now feel that at this time there needs to be brought into existence an independent safety commission to over see the proper execution of safety protocols at **Freeport Container Port** and other industrial facilities.

Below is a list of concerns that we feel needs to be addressed by Freeport Container Port. This list does not intend to be an exhaustive list of the concerns of the employees of Freeport Container Port and is subject to addition as they are communicated by the current and previous staff of Freeport Container Port.

We the employees reserve the right to collectively designate and/or appoint an individual, group or organization in written form, to further speak in the interest of and on behalf of the concerns of this body and report the same to the group for endorsement and/or acceptance of the outcome.

We are open to direct or arbitrational discussion to categorizing these and future concerns into one of four categories as follows: **Immediate, Short Term, Medium Term or Long Term goals.**

SAFETY CONCERNS

Safety is paramount in the operation of Freeport Container Port. We the employees are aware of the dynamic environment we work in that relies upon both human and mechanical elements. It is therefore imperative that both the employee and employer participate in bringing forth a workplace that is conducive to this as well as play attention to and provide input in all aspects of safety in our operation. In view of this some of our concerns are:

- (A) The ratio between employees and certified safety officers needs to be addressed. Their need to be an increase of certified safety officers.
- (B) The safety department needs to be relocated into the operations area and a certified safety officer should be visible at all times within the operations area at Freeport Container Port.
- (C) Personal air indicators should be provided for all berth operators while working onboard all berthed vessels to ensure the air quality is of acceptable standards for the berth operators to work in.
- (D) Berth vessels at Freeport Container Port should have a certified safety officer of Freeport Container Port onboard for the inspection of the vessel and deem the conditions safe before the berth operators commence working.
- (E) The lack of lighting poses a significant challenge for operations employees of Freeport Container Port. The berth operators has had to rely on the ships lights between the bay to complete lashing. At minimum cranes should be allowed to stay in position to allow adequate lighting for the berth operators to complete lashing. In addition the crane drivers at Freeport Container Port needs the establishment of a better lighting system to be put in place for increased operating visibility.
- (F) Fire extinguishers and/or fire suppression systems needs to be replaced or in many cases installed.
- (G) The mandatory availability of adequate safety apparel and resources (gloves, hard hats, safety glasses, etc.) to all employees, at all times at Freeport Container Port.

LABOUR CONCERNS

We understand the engagement of casual labour in this industry and the need for them to be utilized during periods of regular employees' absence, sickness, holidays and at peak demand and exceptional volumes which may occur from time to time, however it appears that Freeport Container Port has adopted the standard of daily use of this procedure in its operations. In view of this some of our concerns are:

- (A) Reestablishment of the 40 hour work week or minimum acceptable working hours threshold for permanent employees and assurances that future modifications of threshold is not to occur without consultation and acceptance of the employees.
- (B) Temporary employee at Freeport Container Port should be afforded the same customary benefits as full time employees while they complete a fixed time frame of probation until recognition as permanent employees of Freeport Container Port.
- (C) The establishment of benefits and protections for individuals designated thru the exercise of casual employees at Freeport Container Port that is comparable to regular employees (as they are subject to the same workplace employment risks).
- (D) The employees at Freeport Container Port needs a employee advocacy representative system established. A immediate environment needs to be established to bridge the employee management communication gap and that would allow for dialogue and uninhibited expressions of concerns without fear of victimization.
- (E) The establishment of a procedure for employees to review the employee's employment records and contest any negative information on record at a minimum of once a year.

- (F) Establishment and development of accurate job descriptions and responsibilities without the daily co-mingling on responsibilities without consent of the employees.

PAY CONCERNS

Freeport Container Port is a logistical services company based in Freeport Grand Bahama, with a international responsibility to the global community. The local and global threats and risk factors that the employees face every day must be taken in context.

The employees of Freeport Container Port report to work having to walk by two radioactive scanners that scan containers at the facility for explosive materials. The employees of Freeport Container Port operate heavy equipment four stories high and in some cases eleven stories high that pose great risk and danger to the operators. The night shift at Freeport Container Port is much more difficult to work in with poor light and fatigue this shift causes a overall health break down. Beyond all the challenges faced by the trained professional employees of Freeport Container Port the facility has a gained a world class status. In view of this some of our concerns are:

- (A) The employees of Freeport Container Port want the establishment of industry standard pay increases for each discipline as fair and reasonable compensation.
- (B) The employees at Freeport Container Port the establishment of hazardous pay as compensation for those working in environments that is considered to be subject to additional non designated risk factors. These risk factors should be examined and agreed to by an industry board.
- (C) The employees of Freeport Container Port should be afforded a night differential payment as compensation for working this shift.

- (D) The employees of Freeport Container Port wants the establishment of a yearly cost of living increase.

HEALTH, LIFE AND DISABILITY COVERAGE CONCERNS

There seems to be a constant rise in employee deductibles from year to year for the little coverage that is afforded to us the employees. Freeport Container Port should possess an interest in the well being and health maintenance of its employees and thus seek to provide better coverage for all it's employees and related families. Co-payments for the staff members was recently increased from \$200 to \$500 at Freeport Container Port. This is only a small example of the poor efforts being made by the management team to provide adequate and reasonable medical coverage. In view of this some of our concerns are:

- (A) The employees of Freeport Container Port wants the establishment of health plan coverage that at minimum covers the workers completely along with the ability for customization that would cover family members.
- (B) The employees of Freeport Container Port wants the establishment of a recognized life insurance plan that sets a minimum coverage based on the risks of the designated job descriptions. The establishment of transparent and full disclosures of amounts of life insurance coverage that currently exists on employees both personally and corporate wise.
- (C) The employees of Freeport Container Port wants the establishment of a recognized disability insurance plan that sets a minimum coverage based on the risks of the designated job descriptions, in the event of loss of limb or bodily injuries, that covers the employee diminished capacity to afford a normal life style, beyond the standard coverage afforded now by National Insurance.

- (D) The establishment of a medical plan that eliminates deductibles and co-payments for yearly checkups, tests, lab works and screening.
- (E) The establishment of an improved vision plan and dental plan that extends coverage to the immediate family of the employee.

SHIFT PATTERN CONCERNS

The shift patterns that has been attempted at Freeport Container Port continues to be a challenge for the management team. The management team has been unsuccessful in providing or constructing a proper and effective shift pattern to aid in the increase of productivity and growth of the company.

The current shift pattern practice at Freeport Container Port has come under legal question as to its implementation amongst employees. With so many misunderstandings at Freeport Container Port pertaining to the shift, and lack of communication or consultation with the employees, and the appearance that this scheduling shows a blatant disregard for the labor laws of The Commonwealth of the Bahamas by the management team of Freeport Container Port, or simple failure of management delegating abilities. The shift pattern has been a challenge for both employee and management for over thirteen years at the container port and has yet to be properly corrected, in accordance to the laws of The Bahamas. In view of this some of our concerns are:

- (A) The development and establishment of a adequate and proper shift system with consultation with the employees.
- (B) immediate engagement in a discussion for collective back pay.
- (C) Establishment of a set productivity goal and systems that rewards employees productivity beyond establish goals.

The employees of Freeport Container Port has not experience the growth of the company. The employees of Freeport Container Port have been placed in harms way on many occasions by Freeport Container Port in its attempts to boost current productivity outputs. With no regard for employee relations the management team at Freeport Container Port has held few meetings with the employees. Employee and company relations should foster a unified vision that can produce unimaginable possibilities. This concept is not shared by the management of Freeport Container Port. With productivity, at any cost including life, seemingly being the ultimate goal at Freeport Container Port, there must be some processes enacted to ensure the safety, health and well being of the employees. The employees of the Freeport Container Port wants fairness and accountability to be displayed by the management team, because ultimately they represent the interest and image of Hutchinson Port Holdings worldwide not just here on Grand Bahama.

In your written response to these and future concerns, we ask that you please state your intent of addressing them in one of the four designated categories of **Immediate, Short Term, Medium Term or Long Term.**

Sincerely,

[Collective Employees of Freeport Container Port](#)