



Bay State Companies Shaken But Safe

By Donna Goodison | Saturday, March 12, 2011

Bay State businesses scrambled to recover from yesterday's massive earthquake in Japan, with one firm asking employees to sleep at a Tokyo office because commuting is impossible.

But the first order of business was making sure everyone was safe.

Norwood computer chip maker Analog Devices has 150 employees in Japan, primarily in Toyko, and all are safe.

"We have made arrangements for a few employees to stay at the office since commuting is hampered throughout the area," said spokeswoman Maria C. Tagliaferro.

Burlington-based Aspen Technology could not assess the structural impact to its Tokyo office, but its 27 employees there are safe, spokesman Erik Mason said.

State Street Corp. has 450 employees in Tokyo, with no injuries reported. "At this point, there is no significant impact to our business operations or office in Tokyo," the Boston company announced.

Dan Richards, CEO of Global Rescue, a Hub-based medical evacuation company with some corporate clients in the hardest-hit areas of the quake zone, said it will take time to account for everyone.

"There's been some pretty severe infrastructure disruptions, and that includes communication capabilities. It's not uncommon in these disaster-type scenarios for people to go unaccounted for a period of time," he said.

More than 200 New England companies have operations in Japan, according to the Massachusetts Office of International Trade & Investment, and the Asian nation — which has the world's third largest economy — is Massachusetts' fifth-largest trading partner.

Cambridge Isotope Laboratories Inc., which sells compounds to research scientists, received a frantic e-mail from one of its best customers yesterday: a molecular researcher living in Tokyo.

"He said all the roads were filled with walking people and heavy traffic," spokesman Kevin Millis said. "He walked home 16 kilometers."