Fire at Chinese food packaging plant kills at least 18, state media say

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Hong Kong (CNN) -- A fire at a food packaging plant in eastern China has killed at least 18 people, state-run media reported Monday.
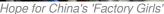
The blaze hit a carrot packaging facility late Sunday in Shouguang City, Shandong province, China's state news agency Xinhua reported, citing local authorities.

Thirteen people injured in the fire are being treated in the hospital, the news agency said.

The plant belongs to Longyuan Food Co., according to Xinhua. Company managers "have been put under police control," it said, without giving further details.

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The cause of the blaze, which began around 7 p.m. and was extinguished by around 9:30 p.m., is still being investigated.

Staff at the local police station declined to provide further information on the fire when contacted by phone Monday. Longyuan Food Co. wasn't immediately available for comment.

Deadly fires and explosions are not uncommon at Chinese factories, where international labor organizations regularly criticize safety conditions.

A blast at a fireworks factory in Hunan province killed 14 people in September, according to state media. A day later in the same province, a blaze at a chemical plant killed five people.

An explosion at a wheel-hub-polishing facility in Jiangsu province killed at least 75 people in August. And authorities said a fire at a shoe factory in Zhejiang province killed 16 people in January.

CNN's Serena Dong contributed to this report.

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