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600 postal staff refuse overtime

ABOUT 600 of 1,600 postal staff scheduled for overtime refused additional work yesterday, according to a Post Office survey.

Spokesman Allan Chiang said postal services had been mildly influenced by the three-day union action that started on Thursday.

Mr Chiang said a department survey found about 300 workers who refused overtime said they were supporting the unions' call to protest against the Government's reluctance to improve promotion prospects and working conditions.

The other 300 staff members who refused overtime gave reasons not involved with the industrial action, he said.

Postal staff unions said the Post Office was trying to break the unions' resolve by issuing "misleading" figures.

Nau Kwok-biu, chairman of the Postal Branch

of the Hongkong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, said they had confirmed 80 per cent of 4,600 postal workers are supporting the boycott.

"We told our members they did not need to tell their superiors that they were refusing overtime work because of the three-day union boycott.

"That was to avoid possible future retaliation against loyal union members. Unless the Post Office had this intention, we don't know any reason for their survey of workers," he said.

He said some members reported that their superiors threatened that they would not be offered overtime in the future if they supported the industrial action.

But Mr Chiang denied the accusation, saying the survey was aimed at providing the press with needed information.