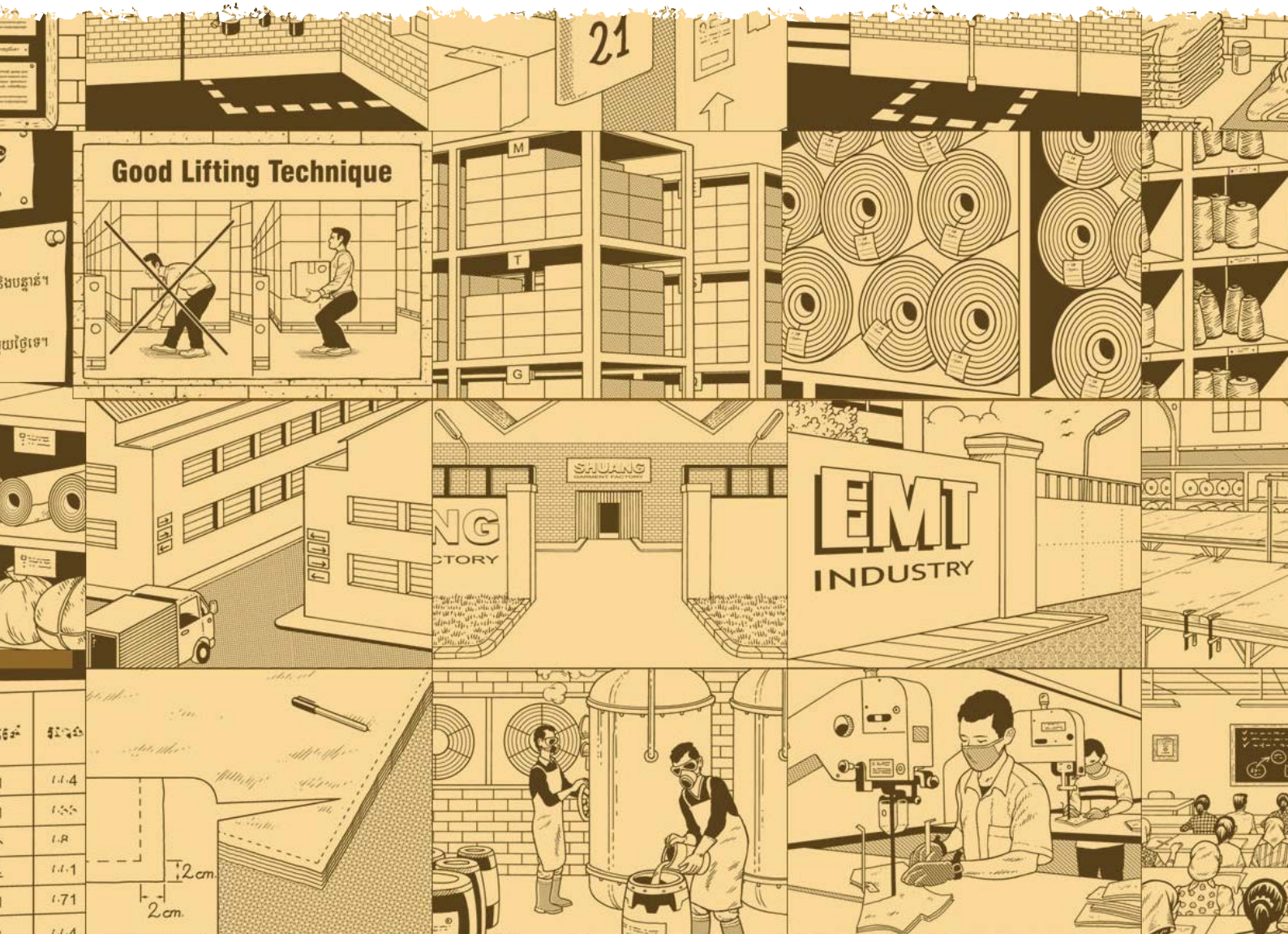




**BETTER WORK**  
*Vietnam*

# Good Practices: Apparel

Better working conditions, better business...



Establishing good practices can significantly improve working conditions, increase workplace safety and raise productivity.

The following are some simple good practices for the apparel industry. They are cost efficient and easy to implement.

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[www.betterwork.org/vietnam](http://www.betterwork.org/vietnam)



- Displaying Line Sample and Pattern
- Educational Posters
- Emergency Plans
- Entrance Gate
- Establishing a Library
- Establishing a Proper Canteen
- Fabric Laying Technique
- Fabric Storage
- Fire Fighting
- Fire Safety
- Glare from Light Producing Machines
- Good Lighting
- Induction Training Kit
- Ironing Workstation Design
- Machine Maintenance
- Machine Safety
- Materials Handling in the Production Line
- Organisation of Noticeboards
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Personal Protective Equipment for Dyeing
- Proper Sanitation Facilities
- Proper Storage of Tools, Parts and Equipment
- Providing Support to Working Mothers
- Provision of Pure Drinking Water
- Quality Control Workstation Design
- Rubbish/Waste Collection
- Spot Cleaning Area
- Spot Cleaning Operation
- Stairway Safety
- Stock Control of the Garment Trims Store
- Store Organisation
- Store Room Safety



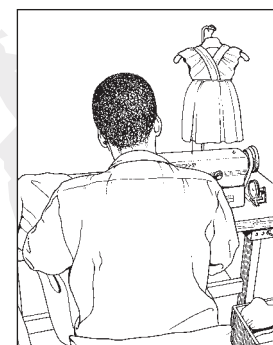
## Good Practices

### Displaying Line Sample and Pattern

Finished products should always meet the buyer's quality and design specifications. One way to achieve this is to display a sample of the finished product on the production line. This helps workers to see what the finished product should look like and to understand what the design, dimensions and quality of the finished product need to be.

#### Good practices for displaying line sample and pattern in sewing line

- Display both a line sample and the buyer's sample for reference. This helps workers (and buyers) to see what the end product will be (See figure).
- Display the pattern in the production line. The pattern should include all product dimensions.
- Put two or three samples at each station on the production line and denote what part of the pattern each employee is working on.



#### Benefits

- ✓ Reduces the risk of mistakes.
- ✓ Workers can see exactly what the finished product should look like. This helps ensure consistent quality and production.
- ✓ Easy for workers and supervisors to check measurements.
- ✓ Helps when supervisors introduce new product lines.
- ✓ Workers better understand how their job relates to the finished product and are thus better motivated.

#### How

- Use a plain white board and draw the garment pattern on it.
- Display a line sample and the buyer's sample in the production line.
- Ensure that workers understand what the pattern depicts.

**Costs: \$**

\$ Low cost   \$\$ Moderate cost   \$\$\$ High cost

If you have any questions, contact the Better Work team at [info@betterwork.org](mailto:info@betterwork.org)



## Good Practices

### Educational Posters

Displaying educational posters is a powerful way to educate workers. It is very effective because they are easy to make, deliver a consistent message, and use pictures which are a strong form of communication targeting specific behaviour. Examples which have been useful for other garment factories include posters on lifting postures, proper mask wearing and reproductive health.

#### Good practices for store organisation

- Use posters to address specific problems or concerns. For example, posters can remind workers to dispose of fabric in rubbish bins or how to use proper lifting postures.
- Use posters to change (or reinforce) desired behaviours using local examples.
- Display posters where they will be useful and are easy to see.
- Posters relating to specific jobs should be near relevant workstations.
- Posters relating to general factory behaviours should be located in more centralized areas.
- Posters work best when they are part of a more comprehensive training program that includes training, information sessions, exercises, etc.

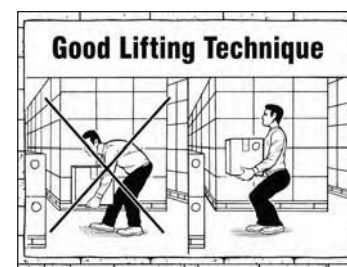


Figure 1



Figure 2

#### Benefits

- ✓ Posters that promote safety and reinforce important skills will present a positive image of the workplace.
- ✓ Demonstrates to workers and buyers that the company cares about the welfare of its staff.
- ✓ Easily, cheaply and consistently communicates simple messages about jobs.

#### How

- Create your own posters. Draw pictures or have workers' photographs taken and add text.
- Use posters to communicate simple points in order to make the message clear and direct.
- Download free posters or images from the internet and add in text.
- Make posters for specific work procedures, such as the information offered on the Good Practice Sheets.

#### Costs: \$

\$ Low cost   \$\$ Moderate cost   \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Emergency Plans and Equipment

Emergency tools are required and important for all factories. Garment factories that care about the health and safety of their workers invest money on emergency equipment to ensure the safety of workers. Crucial emergency elements are alarms, evacuation plans, emergency lights and gathering areas.

#### Good practices for equipping emergency fire prevention equipment

- Have people practice emergency evacuation procedures regularly.
- Post evacuation plans so workers understand where to exit in case of emergencies (Figure 1).
- Install an alarm system, including bells, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Ensure there are sufficient numbers, and check them regularly to ensure that they work properly (Figure 2).
- Install back up battery powered emergency lights in case of power outages.
- Make sure that every floor or large room has at least two exits, ensure that these remain unlocked at all times, and make sure they are labeled.
- Make sure that there is sufficient lighting and signage so workers are able to reach exits quickly.
- Designate safe gathering areas outside the factory to check and verify that all workers have been safely evacuated from factory buildings in an emergency situation.

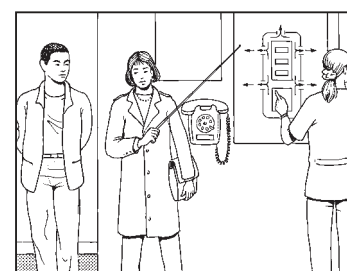


Figure 1

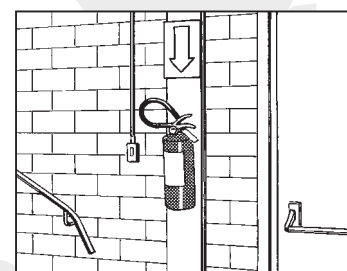


Figure 2

#### Benefits

- ✓ Reduces workers' fear of workplace accidents.
- ✓ Promotes the image of a safe garment factory to buyers and other stakeholders.
- ✓ Can increase workers' productivity.

#### How

- Identify appropriate places to install sufficient numbers of smoke detectors, and fire alarms.
- Fire extinguishers should be located near potential sources of fire.
- Inspect emergency equipment regularly to make sure they are working properly.
- Repair or replace old equipment regularly.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Entrance Gate

Visitors and workers see the factory entrance first, which is an opportunity to send a strong positive signal about the quality and work of the factory. A neat and tidy entrance creates a positive first impression, while an entrance which is dirty or disorganized reflects poorly on it. A factory which has a clean, tidy and secure entrance demonstrates a commitment to quality, productivity, and sound working conditions.

### Good practices for the factory's main entrance

- Clearly display the factory name and logo (Figure 1).
- Make sure that the entrance to the factory is clean and tidy (Figure 2).
- Repaint old or flaking paintwork.
- Make sure that security guards are trained in the correct procedures for allowing workers and visitors to enter the factory.
- Use clear signage to help visitors and workers navigate around the factory. This also indicates that the factory is well organised (Figure 3).
- Inform workers of the factory's expectations regarding behavior around the factory entrance.

### Benefits

- ✓ Sends a positive signal to visitors, buyers, and workers.
- ✓ Indicates an attitude of responsibility and attention to detail.
- ✓ Indicates that the company values productivity and good working conditions.

### How

- Review the quality of the entrance to the factory by asking visitors to the factory if it was easy to find and what they thought about the entrance.
- Install appropriate signage or replace old or out of date signs.
- Put someone in charge of maintaining the front area.

**Costs:** \$



Figure 1

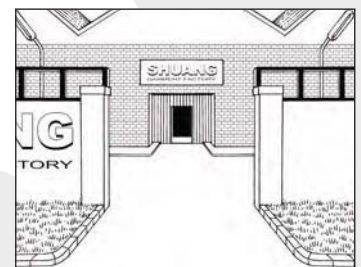


Figure 2

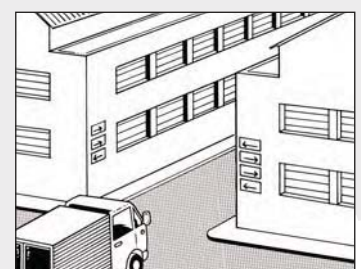


Figure 3

\$ Low cost   \$\$ Moderate cost   \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Establishing a Library

Factories with motivated and productive workers often outperform competitors. Establishing a library for the benefit of workers is an excellent way for a factory to demonstrate that it cares about its staff and to build goodwill in the community.

#### Good practices for store organisation

- Provide chairs and tables for workers to sit and read in the library (Figure 1).
- Establish a borrowing system by recording the names of workers who borrow books to read at home (Figure 2).
- Encourage workers to donate their own books or magazines.
- Make sure workers can read and write. If they cannot, provide information about a local instruction program.
- Ensure that all workers have equal access to use the library.

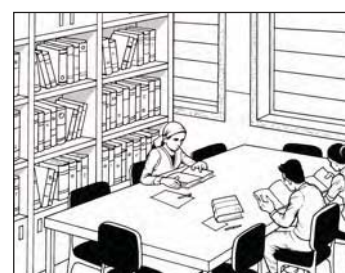


Figure 1

#### Benefits

- ✓ Presents a positive image of the factory to buyers and the community.
- ✓ May increase sales to buyers who value social responsibility.
- ✓ Builds goodwill between the factory and workers.
- ✓ Better educated workforce.
- ✓ Library can be used to host a literacy program.

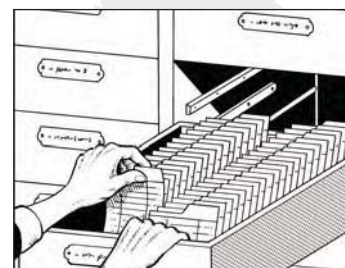


Figure 2

#### How

- Identify a suitable location for a library. The space should be on the factory premises and in a quiet location.
- Contact NGOs for books and possible funding.
- Budget for book renewal.
- Interested workers can use their free time to take responsibility for the library. A team can be created to develop the library.
- Ask workers what kind of books they want supplied.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Establishing and Running a Proper Canteen

Because a balanced diet plays an important role in improving employees' health, and boosting productivity, maintaining a good canteen can contribute to a productive work environment. Factories are increasingly investing in this area to ensure that productivity levels remain high throughout the work day. An ILO study on workers in developing countries found that food of poor quality (e.g. iron deficient) causes a productivity loss of \$ 5 billion per annum in South East Asia, while providing a good meal can lead to productivity enhancements of 20%.

#### Good practices for the importance of establishing and running a proper canteen

- Include an area where workers can prepare drinks or heat up food from home.
- Food provided by the canteen should be nutritious and satisfying. This way, energy that has been spent during productive work can be replenished.
- Ensure that the canteen, dishes, and silverware are all cleaned hygienically. For example, use hot water and dish soap to clean dishes and silverware after use (Figure 1).
- Provide healthy and nutritious food such as fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains.
- Provide a comfortable and well-ventilated canteen that provides workers a place to relax after they have finished eating (Figure 2).

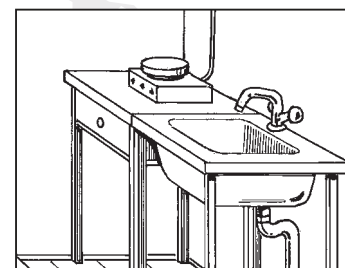


Figure 1

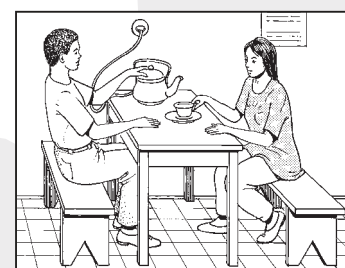


Figure 2

#### Benefits

- ✓ Appropriate employee nourishment improves employee morale, increases productivity, and prevents diseases.
- ✓ Centralized provision of food in a canteen during overtime work saves time and enhances productivity.
- ✓ A well functioning canteen facilitates workers to enjoy a leisurely meal in their work place and increases morale.

#### How

- Select an appropriate location within or nearby the factory premises. Such a location must be away from workstations, to avoid contact with dirt, dust, or hazardous substances.
- Invest in proper furniture and facilities such as chairs, tables, fans and a refrigerator.
- Ensure that the canteen allows employees to take a break from their work in a comfortable environment.
- Arrange for workers to eat at different times, thus reducing the space needed for sufficient seating.

#### Costs: \$\$

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Fabric Laying Technique

High quality and efficient garment manufacturing starts with a good fabric laying technique. Simple steps can lead to significant cost savings for the factory and improve the quality of the finished product. Poor or incorrect fabric laying technique lead to higher costs, slower production and inferior products quality.

### Good practices for the fabric cutting area

- When laying fabric, make sure that the distance from the edge of the fabric to the marker is 2 cm in order to minimize waste (Figure 1).
- Each fabric has its own maximum lay depth. Design and display a fabric depth chart to inform workers about lay depth (Figure 2). Small samples of the fabric can be stapled to the chart in addition to the description so workers can clearly identify the fabric.
- When laying check patterned fabrics, using pin strips ensures straight checked lines.
- Use adjustable clamps to keep fabric from moving during the fabric cutting process (Figure 3).

### Benefits

- ✓ Improves quality of work.
- ✓ Improves productivity.
- ✓ Increases cutting accuracy.
- ✓ Reduces errors and waste.

### How

- Fabric depth chart can be prepared by factory staff.
- Clamps are available at commercial markets.
- Provide regular training to teach workers the skills for good fabric laying.

Costs: \$

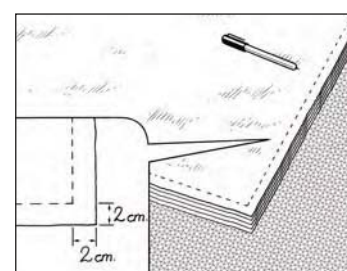


Figure 1

| Loại vải   | Số lượng | Giá  |
|------------|----------|------|
| Loại vải 1 | 1        | 1.4  |
| Loại vải 2 | 1        | 1.5  |
| Loại vải 3 | 2        | 1.8  |
| Loại vải 4 | 2        | 1.1  |
| Loại vải 5 | 1        | 1.71 |

Figure 2

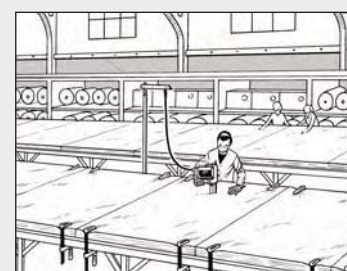


Figure 3

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Fabric Storage

The quality of a finished garment dependent on the quality of the fabric used. Fabric should be kept in good condition and be consistent in appearance. A good storage system keeps the fabric in an ideal environment and tracks details of the fabric used in production. Please also refer to the Good Practice Guides for Store Organisation and Stock Control of Garment Trims.

### Good practices for fabric store

- Always store fabric on a rack or shelf and never on the floor.
- Identify and store the fabric by roll, width, batch, style, lot and color.
- Use a bin card system to update the stock balance.
- Store the fabric lying down, not standing up (Figure 1).
- Keep a record of which fabric rolls were used in the production of garments so that quality problems can be identified easily.
- Have rolling carts available for moving fabric between storage and production (Figure 2).

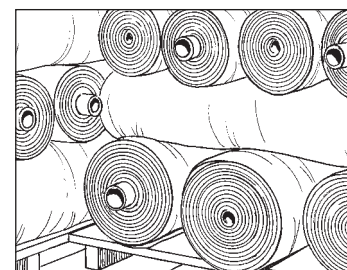


Figure 1

### Benefits

- ✓ Costs are reduced because fabric is less likely to be damaged.
- ✓ Prevent possible loss of costly material.
- ✓ Garments are produced from the same fabric batch, which ensures consistency of colour and fabric quality.
- ✓ Increases productivity by reducing the amount of time needed to look for fabric.
- ✓ Makes it easier to do a stock-take.
- ✓ Factory floor is kept clear, reducing risk of accidents and increasing work space.



Figure 2

### How

- Ensure that there are sufficient racks to store all fabric lying down, off the floor.
- Use multilevel shelving to increase storage capacity.
- Implement better record-keeping procedures to keep track of fabric.
- Make sure that the factory store manager and staff take responsibility for storing, distributing and tracking fabric usage.

**Costs: \$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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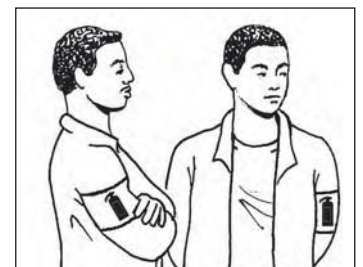
## Good Practices

### Fire Fighters

It is a good idea to establish fire fighting teams. A quick response to fires can save money by reducing the chance of serious harm to people or property. Provide identification for fire fighters, so that in case of an emergency other workers know who to ask for help. See also Good Practice Guides on Fire Safety and Fire Extinguishers.

#### Good practices for fire fighters

- Form fire fighting teams. There should be at least one fire fighter for each section of the factory.
- Fire fighters must receive regular training, and the number of fire fighters should be proportional to the total workforce.
- Provide identification to fire fighters. A good form of identification is a brightly coloured armband (See figure) or a badge on their shirt.
- Pictures of fire fighters should be prominently displayed for all workers to see.
- Drill fire fighters and workers at least once every six months.
- Fire fighters must be part of a larger safety team that includes first aid coordinators, evaluation coordinators, etc.



#### Benefit

- ✓ In case of a fire, the fire fighters can be easily identified and can respond fast and efficiently.
- ✓ A quick response to fires can save money and lives.
- ✓ Promotes a good image of a responsible workplace.

#### How

- Form fire fighting teams in each floor.
- Provide training to fire fighters.
- Provide identification to fire fighters by using garment scraps to make:
  - uniforms; and/or
  - badges; and/or
  - arm bands;
- Post pictures of fire fighters so workers know who they are.

**Costs: \$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Fire Safety

Fire safety is important; it can save money and lives. The best fire safety practices prevent fires by reducing the risk of fire. Training workers is a very cost effective way to improve fire safety, because it teaches workers how to prevent fires from starting and what to do in case of an emergency. Make sure that there is enough fire safety equipment and that it is checked regularly. See also Good Practice Guides on Fire Fighters.

### Good practices for fire safety in the factory

- Suitable types of fire extinguishers and fire hoses must be available. Some fires (e.g. electrical fires) require special types of extinguishers. Common types of extinguishers are dry chemical, halon, and CO2.
- Place extinguishers and hoses where the risk of fire is greatest.
- Denote the location of fire extinguishers and fire hoses by marking the floor below and painting the nearest wall or pillar red and/or placing signs above head height. These signs also mean that nothing is allowed to obstruct access (Figure 1).
- Install back-up lighting and water supplies in case the electricity or water mains are affected by fire.
- Install fire alarms in the factory (Figure 2).
- Ensure that electrical circuits are enclosed, insulated, earthed, properly fused, and not overloaded.
- Keep combustible material away from hot surfaces and open flames.

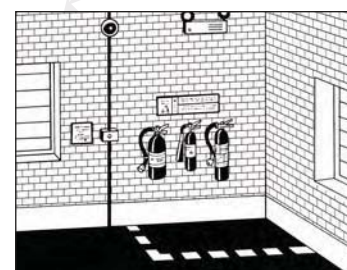


Figure 1

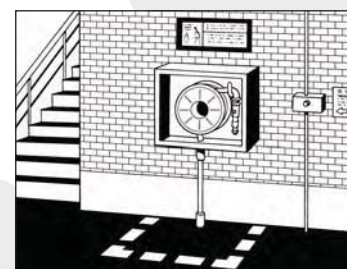


Figure 2

### Benefits

- ✓ Fire prevention saves money by protecting property and lives.
- ✓ Minimizes fire hazards and risks.
- ✓ Safer workplace environment.
- ✓ Helps to show that the company cares about the welfare of its workers.
- ✓ May reduce insurance costs.

### How

- Check fire safety systems to make sure that there are enough suitable extinguishers, hoses and exit signs.
- Make sure all fire safety equipment is tested at least once per year and is in good condition.
- Make sure fire equipment is easy to get to in case of an emergency and that signage is clearly visible.
- Form fire fighting teams (See *Fire Fighters* Good Practice Sheet).
- Implement an emergency plan which includes evacuation procedures.
- Run a factory inspection to determine where hazards are.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Glare from Light Producing Machines

Some light-producing machines used in garment factories can be hazardous to workers. Glare from the light can cause dizziness, headaches and fatigue, which can lead to mistakes and reduce productivity. Long-term exposure can damage the workers' vision. Workers should wear suitable goggles, or guards should be fitted to the machines to deflect light away from the eyes.

### Good practices for shading workers from glare

- Cover windows with blinds, curtains, louvers, shades or plants (Figure 1).
- Use translucent windows, instead of transparent ones.
- Ensure that workers are not facing directly toward the windows by changing the orientation of their workstations (Figure 2).
- Use shades to deflect glare from light sources.
- Reflective surfaces can distract workers as well – ensure that light from these sources does not shine in workers' eyes.
- Make sure that there is enough light for workers to be able to see their work without straining their eyes.
- Change florescent light bulbs as soon as they stop working to ensure good lighting.

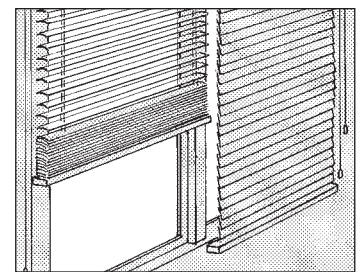


Figure 1

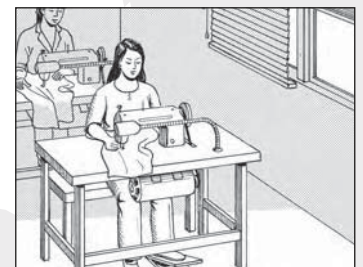


Figure 2

### Benefits

- ✓ Reduces glare-related illness and injury.
- ✓ Reduces mistakes made by tired workers.
- ✓ Workers are more efficient.

### How

- A plank of wood or metal sheeting can be used as a light shield.
- Reflective surfaces can be painted or covered with non-glossy material (such as whitewash).
- Bothersome light sources can be moved or lowered in brightness.
- Ensure that spare bulbs are available.
- Ask workers where they need more light.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Good Lighting

Proper lighting conditions are critical for good productivity. Many employers have found that lighting improvements have improved productivity by 10 percent, and reduced errors by 30 percent. Conversely, poor lighting can cause eye strain, fatigue and headache.

### Good practices for good lighting

- Make full use of natural lighting through windows or skylights. This reduces electricity bills and improves the work environment.
- Workstations that need more light should be moved closer to windows.
- Use a combination of natural and artificial light and adjust lighting to the task-related types of work (Figure 1).
- Interior color affects how much illumination is needed. Ensure that ceilings are as close to white as possible. Use pale colors on walls.
- Use local lighting (needle lights) when necessary for some types of fabric, thread or seams at the needle point (Figure 2).
- Re-orient the workstations to maximize use of available light.

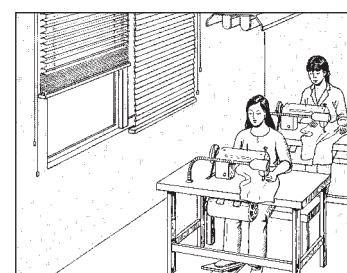


Figure 1



Figure 2

### Benefits

- ✓ Improved quality and higher productivity.
- ✓ Decreased fatigue and work-related illnesses like eye strain and headaches.
- ✓ Improved health condition of the workers leads to a decrease in absenteeism.

### How

- Provide more windows and skylights throughout the entire factory. These should be cleaned regularly.
- Install more light where necessary.
- Regularly maintain lights by dusting off light sources, replacing lights at regular intervals, and cleaning dirt on walls, ceilings, windows, and skylights.
- Observe workers and ask them about their vision problems.
- Contrasting colour paint for a tabletop or a partition between workstations is suitable for a visual background.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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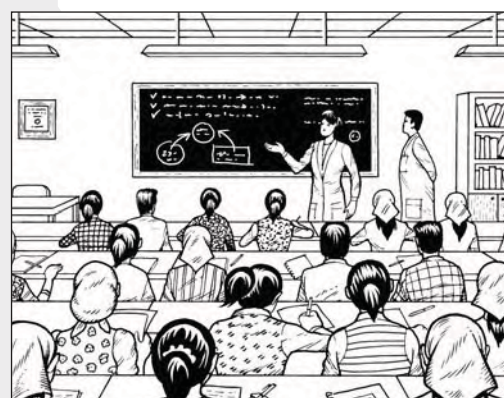
## Good Practices

### Induction Training Kit

It is crucial that all new employees are properly oriented to their new working environment and understand their rights and responsibilities. This can ultimately help to reduce potential industrial disputes, improve understanding and communication between management and workers and promote higher productivity for the enterprise.

#### Good practices for induction training kit

- Management can use the *Better Work* training materials to support their own induction process to educate new workers on their rights and responsibilities when they are newly employed in the factory.
- HR managers should hold induction sessions regularly to ensure that new workers are properly inducted and aware of their workplace rights and responsibilities (See figure).
- Enterprise HR managers/trainers with induction responsibilities should participate in *Better Work* training sessions so that they clearly understand how to use the materials.



#### Benefits

- ✓ Workers better understand their rights and responsibilities.
- ✓ Helps to build mutual understanding between management and workers.
- ✓ Helps to build trust and good workplace cooperation.
- ✓ Helps to reduce industrial dispute, leading to higher productivity.

#### How

- Get the induction materials from *Better Work*.
- Hold regular induction training programs and ensure that all new workers are properly inducted.
- Designate proper facilities (training rooms) to run the induction training and other training activities.

Costs: \$

\$ Low cost   \$\$ Moderate cost   \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Ironing Workstation Design

A well-designed workstation is crucial to productive and efficient work. Even minor changes in workstation design can make a big difference to productivity, health and safety.

### Good practices for ironing workstations

- Attach an elastic spring to the iron to reduce worker fatigue and improve productivity (Figure 1).
- Provide an 'ironing pad' which the iron can rest on when it is not in use. This protects the surface and will keep the iron clean (Figure 2).
- Provide a 'fatigue mat' to workers who iron in the standing position. This will help to reduce fatigue and improve productivity.
- Provide a foot platform so that shorter workers may iron at a comfortable height.

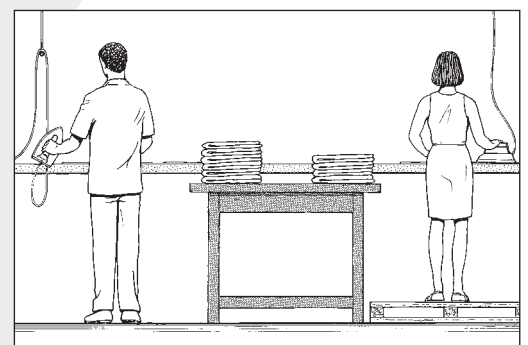


Figure 1

### Benefits

- ✓ Increases productivity.
- ✓ Improves garment quality.
- ✓ Reduce absenteeism due to sickness.
- ✓ Demonstrates that the factory cares about the health and welfare of its employees.

### How

- Install springs, fatigue mats, and ironing pads at each ironing workstation.

### Costs: \$

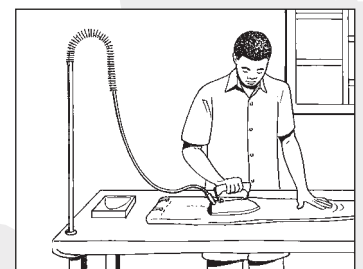


Figure 2

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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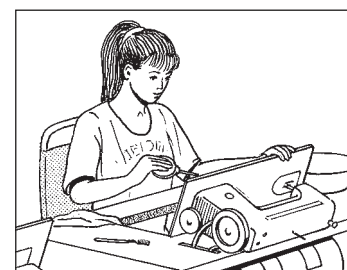
## Good Practices

### Machine Maintenance

Good machine maintenance is an investment in productivity. Well maintained machines are more reliable, safer and last longer. Basic maintenance is not expensive and can often be done by workers. Workers should be taught simple machine maintenance skills such as machine cleaning, adjusting thread tension, changing broken needles, bobbin changes and emptying the dust filter.

#### Good practices for machine maintenance

- Clean machines as often as possible to reduce the risk of dust damaging machinery. Using a vacuum is recommended so that dirt can be removed (See figure).
- Regularly clean or replace the sewing machine's vacuum filter.
- Cover machines during lunch breaks and when they are not in use.
- Post maintenance information and maintenance schedules directly onto machines.



#### Benefits

- ✓ Reduces maintenance costs.
- ✓ Reduces risk of machine breakdown.
- ✓ Improved productivity.
- ✓ Safer working environment.
- ✓ Making machine covers reduces maintenance costs of machines.

#### How

- Purchase an industrial vacuum cleaner. The investment now will save future machine maintenance costs.
- Use scraps to make covers for machines when not in use.
- Schedule a maintenance routine for all machines.
- Develop on-the-job training sessions where senior operators instruct newer employees how to properly clean machines.
- Ask manufacturers for advice regarding machine maintenance.

#### Costs: \$

\$ Low cost   \$\$ Moderate cost   \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Machine Safety: Safety Guards

Machines in garment factories need to have safety guards in order to prevent serious injuries to workers. In particular, make sure that sewing machines have needle and belt guards installed.

#### Good practices for machine guarding

- Make sure that all machines have appropriate safety guards installed (Figure 1).
- Make improvised guards for any machines which do not come with guards (Figure 2).
- Needle guards must be well maintained and replaced regularly to deter workers from removing them.
- Regularly provide workers with training on machine handling and good safety practices.

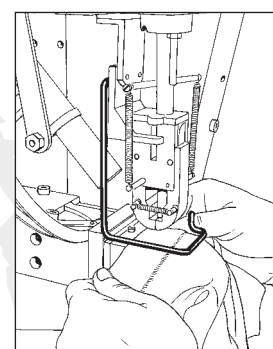


Figure 1

#### Benefits

- ✓ Reduces accidents and associated costs.
- ✓ Increases productivity because fewer accidents means increased production time.
- ✓ Enhances awareness of workplace safety.
- ✓ May improve work satisfaction and workplace performance.
- ✓ Workers understand that the employer cares about their safety, and are then more motivated.

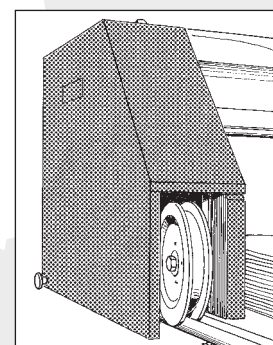


Figure 2

#### How

- Workshop staff can use metal sheets (or clear hard plastic sheets) to build safety guards.
- Implement an on-going safety training program for all workers.
- Ensure that workers are aware of how dangerous unguarded machines can be, and tell them not to remove guards.

#### Costs: \$

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Materials Handling in the Production Line

A more efficient workplace is more profitable. Introducing tools or systems which make the production line more efficient is often very cost effective. Simple measures which improve the efficiency of the production line include using wheel carts and hanging-rails on wheels.

### Good practices for materials handling in production lines

- Use line pick-up trays to feed garment bundles into the production line.
- Use movable wheel carts to transport materials to the workstation (Figures 1 and 2).
- Use hanging-rails on wheels to prevent crumpling of ready-to-deliver products and make transportation of finished items safer (Figure 3).

### Benefits

- ✓ Reduces the amount of time spent on materials handling.
- ✓ Improves product quality.
- ✓ Reduces the amount of storage space needed for finished goods and materials.

### How

- Trays and hangers can be found locally in commercial markets.

**Costs:** \$

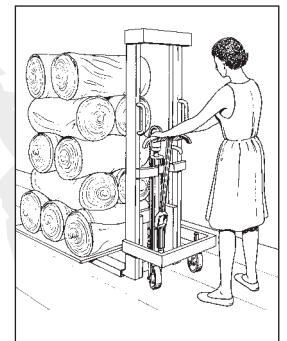


Figure 1

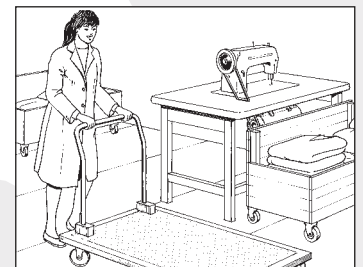


Figure 2

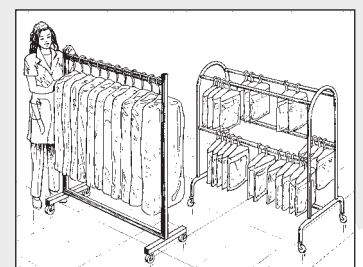


Figure 3

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Organisation of Noticeboards

A noticeboard is an important source of information for workers. It should be updated regularly and organised in an orderly manner so that workers can find the information they need easily.

### Good practices for organisation of noticeboards

- Keep the noticeboard as neat and tidy as possible (Figure 1).
- Remove outdated pieces of information as frequently as possible.
- Label the noticeboard by topic and in multiple languages. Workers can find the information they need quickly and easily (Figure 2).
- Place the noticeboard in a position where workers can easily see it.
- Consider making individuals (or teams) responsible for keeping the noticeboard clean, tidy and up-to-date.
- Designate a section to be open for worker and union announcements.



Figure 1

### Benefits

- ✓ Keeps workers informed.
- ✓ Good image of workplace.
- ✓ Workers receive up-to-date information.
- ✓ Improves workplace cooperation between management and workers.
- ✓ Allowing workers to post announcements on a public forum increases trust.

### How

- Appropriately label each type of information displayed.
- Remove outdated information and replace it with the up-to-date information.

### Costs: \$

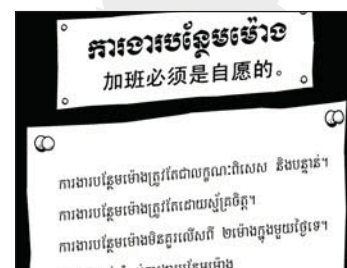


Figure 2

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs to be provided to workers by the factory. The type of PPE needed varies depending on the hazards of the work being performed. PPE should be used **only as a last resort**, after all other measures to improve safety have been taken. See also “PPE in dyeing section.”

#### Good practices for the provision and use of PPE

- Provide chainmail (metal mesh) gloves to workers using cutting equipment to protect them from finger injuries (Figure 1), and make sure that gloves are available for left-handed workers.
- Provide adequate dust masks to workers (e.g. cutters) to protect them from breathing in chemical dust (Figure 2).
- Old or worn out PPE does not protect workers: Make sure that PPE is in good condition and always replace it when needed or after manufacturer's recommended period of use expires.

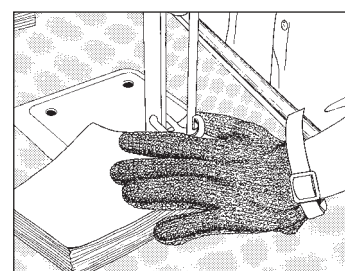


Figure 1



Figure 2

#### Benefits

- ✓ Reduces risk of accident and illness.
- ✓ Minimises future medical costs.
- ✓ Safer working environment.

#### How

- Purchase the best available PPE, not the cheapest. Good quality PPE lasts longer and protects better.
- Provide training to demonstrate how to use PPE properly.
- Provide on-going training to educate workers on their specific workplace risks and the benefits of using PPE in workplaces.
- Ensure workers wear appropriate PPE whenever necessary.
- Put up appropriate signs near relevant workstations.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Personal Protective Equipment for Dyeing

Many dyeing chemicals present serious health and safety risks to workers. Some chemicals can cause burns to the skin and may be harmful if inhaled. Measures should be taken to avoid exposing workers to dangerous substances. Personal protective equipment (PPE) should be provided.

### Good practices for PPE

- After taking measures to avoid exposing workers to dangerous substances, provide PPE to workers to prevent exposure to harmful substances. This may include safety masks, boots, gloves, aprons and goggles (Figure 1). If gloves are necessary, make sure gloves are provided for left-handed workers.
- Purchase chain mesh gloves for workers who use cutting tools and dust masks for workers who risk breathing in chemical dust (Figure 2).
- Educate workers on:
  - the hazards that exist in their work area;
  - how to maximize the utility of existing safety devices;
  - how to wear the PPE correctly for maximum protection; and
  - how to safely use and dispose of chemical substances.
- Old or worn out PPE does not protect workers. Make sure that PPE is in good condition and always replace it when needed or after manufacturer's recommended period of use expires.



Figure 1

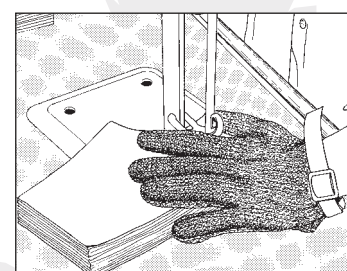


Figure 2

### Benefits

- ✓ Protects safety and health of workers.
- ✓ Offers worker security.
- ✓ Workers are more productive because they do not spend time or energy worrying about hazards.

### How

- Purchase appropriate PPE, especially for workers in the dyeing section.
- Translate Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) into local languages for workers to read.
- Place Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) on the walls in the dyeing area so that workers can get information on the products they are using.
- Implement a continuous safety training program for all workers. These should involve workshops that explain how to use PPE.
- Use safety posters that give workers additional information on chemical products and when and how to use PPE. *See sheet about Posters for more information.*

**Costs: \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Proper Sanitation Facilities

People need clean, sanitary toilet facilities. Proper facilities let workers and buyers know that the employer is concerned about employee safety and well-being. Conversely, poorly maintained toilets and sinks are a primary cause for poor health among workers. As a result, non-appropriate sanitation facilities may be a serious impediment to labour productivity. To ensure that a sufficient level of hygiene is established throughout the factory, toilet facilities must be of reasonable quality, well stocked, cleaned and maintained regularly.

#### Good practices for establishing proper sanitation facilities

- Toilets should be available on each floor and building on the factory premises.
- Generally, provide two toilets for every 40 men and for every 30 women. Provide a sink for every fifteen workers.
- Male and female workers should have separate toilets (Figure 1).
- Toilets should be equipped with ample amounts of soap, water, and toilet paper to ensure good hygiene practices.
- The floor must be clean and free from slippery areas.
- Washrooms should contain mirrors, rubbish bins, and ample water (Figure 2).

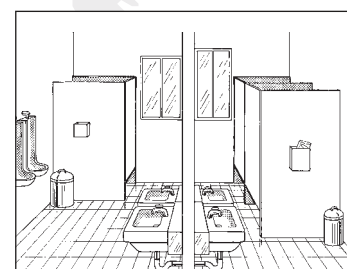


Figure 1

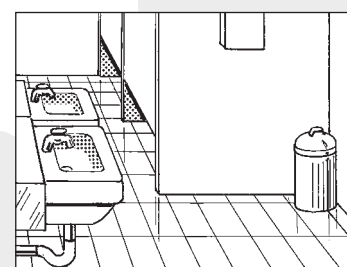


Figure 2

#### Benefits

- ✓ Contributes to a lower incidence of employee illness, and less employee absenteeism.
- ✓ Improves morale among factory workers, which contributes to higher productivity.
- ✓ Promotes a positive impression of the factory to buyers.
- ✓ Hand-washing facilities prevent the spread of disease and illness, and allows workers who work with chemicals to minimize chemical absorption through their hands.

#### How

- Workers must have access to toilets without unreasonable restrictions.
- Toilets must be regularly cleaned (at least once a day).
- Toilets should have lockable doors, proper lightning, waterproof floors and walls and a proper drainage system.
- Make sure surfaces are smooth and easy to clean – tiles are a good surface material.
- Ensure that the room has proper drainage to minimize maintenance cost.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Proper Storage of Tools, Parts and Equipment

To ensure that tools and equipment remain in good condition and last for a long time, store them properly. Properly stored tools and equipment will be easy to find when needed and are less likely to be lost.

### Good practices for mechanical room

- Parts should be properly stored and labeled.
- Tools should be properly labeled and placed on the board (Figure 1). Consider drawing the shapes of the tools on the board so that they always get put back in the same position.
- Use bins for storing small parts (Figure 2).
- Avoid storing things on the floor to increase space.
- Consider making an individual (or individuals) responsible for the good maintenance of tools and parts.
- Make sure that mechanics have the tools they need to accomplish their work, and make sure they understand the organization system.

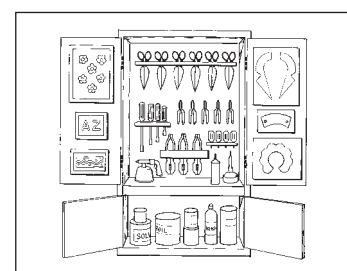


Figure 1

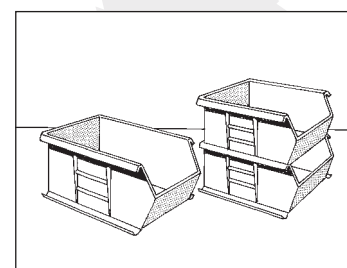


Figure 2

### Benefits

- ✓ Tools and parts are kept in good condition and are easy to find.
- ✓ Costs are reduced.
- ✓ Productivity is increased because time is not lost looking for tools, parts and equipment.
- ✓ Workshop staff develop a sense of responsibility and pride in their work.

### How

- Workshop staff identify tools, parts and equipment.
- Workshop staff develop a system for labeling and storing tools, parts and equipment.
- Maintain order in the mechanical room by establishing a criteria for performance review.

### Costs: \$

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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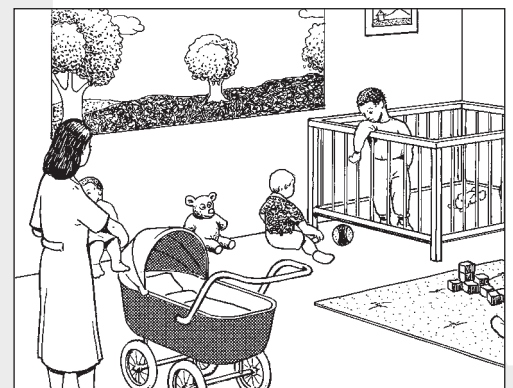
## Good Practices

### Providing Support to Working Mothers

Most countries have laws that specifically address working mothers. Following these laws ensures high morale among workers and a good reputation among buyers. The provision of a nursing room and a day care center provides a positive environment for mothers returning to the workforce.

#### Good practices for establishing breastfeeding and childcare facilities

- Provide the legally mandated maternity leave or 14 weeks, the international good practice benchmark (See ILO Convention 183).
- Allow employees returning from maternity leave to do only light work during the first 2 months back at work.
- Ensure that all pregnant workers have full job security.
- Provide paid breastfeeding breaks each day and offer Flexible working hours to breastfeeding women during the first year of their child's life.
- Establish and operate breastfeeding facilities and a child-care room at the workplace (See figure).
- Encourage co-workers and management to have an accepting and supportive attitude towards breastfeeding.



#### Benefits

- ✓ Mothers who exclusively breast feed for the first 6 months of baby's life have healthier and happier babies.
- ✓ Mothers of healthy babies worry less, which allows them to be more productive.
- ✓ Breastfeeding women are less likely to be absent from work.
- ✓ Well supported working mothers are more likely to return to work after maternity leave. This enables employers to keep trained, experienced and motivated workers with strong loyalty to the employer.

#### How

- Provide space for mothers to breastfeed their children on-site: use a vacant room which is silent and private.
- Keep the environment of the nursing room clean and safe.
- Agree with the employee on a clear schedule of breaks in advance.
- Never allow children on the factory floor. Factory conditions pose a major safety concern for young children.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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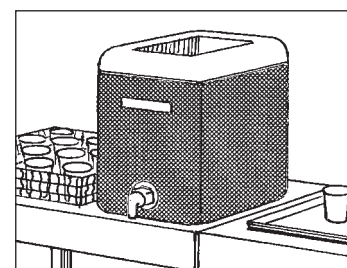
## Good Practices

### Provision of Pure Drinking Water

Drinking water is very important for all workers especially those in hot and humid climates. Heat causes dehydration which leads to fatigue, loss of concentration and loss of productivity.

#### Good practices for provision of pure drinking water

- Workers must be provided with sufficient hygienic drinking water. It must be put in a covered container with a spout at the bottom and not exposed to the sunlight (See figure).
- Drinking water containers should be located close to the workstations, but not near sanitation facilities, dangerous machines, or areas where chemicals are used frequently. This is so that the water doesn't get contaminated.
- If containers are not self-cooling, try to locate water in a relatively cool spot in the factory.
- If there is any doubt about water contamination, the water must be boiled or filtered before consumption.
- Only use piped water if it is guaranteed to be sanitary. Use signs to designate which water is safe to drink and which is not safe to drink.
- Workers should be provided with a proper place to store her/his drinking cup/bottle. This ensures that drinking water doesn't spill on the work station.
- Use disposable cups or materials to minimize the spread of infection.
- Anticipate water consumption increase according to number of worked hours, number of employees, and outside temperature.



#### Benefits

- ✓ Helps workers to recover energy during long hour working days and increases productivity.
- ✓ Decrease in fatigue and work-related illnesses.
- ✓ Improved health conditions of workers leads to a decrease in absenteeism.

#### How

- Sign service contract with reputable drinking water companies.
- Organize drinking water stations away from dust, sunshine, rubbish, and toilets.
- Ensure that workers have equal access to drinking water usage with no undue restrictions.
- Regularly clean water containers, replace old cup/bottles, and change water filters.
- Drinking fountains are a hygienic solution for providing water nearby workstations.

#### Costs: \$

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Quality Control Workstation Design

Because quality control is very important in garment manufacturing, the quality control workstation must be well designed. A poorly designed workstation may lead to poor quality work and the reputation of the factory can suffer. When designing the workstation, provide good lighting, clear work instructions, and all necessary tools.

#### Good practices for the quality control checking table

- Ensure that there is good clear lighting, but that it does not shine directly into the worker's eyes.
- Provide clear work instructions in the worker's language and illustrated with pictures as necessary.
- A measuring tape can be fixed to the table to help when checking garment sizes. This measure can be permanently marked to indicate garment sizes (Figure 1).
- Materials and tools that are used more often should be located closer to the employee.
- Ensure that the worker is comfortable and has correct posture. An adjustable chair with a backrest can greatly improve the posture of seated workers (Figure 2).

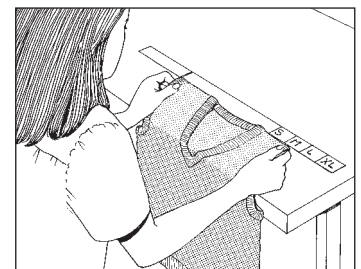


Figure 1

#### Benefits

- ✓ Increases quality and productivity.
- ✓ Reduces worker tiredness and mistakes.
- ✓ Makes quality control easier when new products are introduced.
- ✓ Ensures that workers are given clear instructions and understand what is expected.

#### How

- Have factory staff build quality control workstations using plain white board.
- Install adequate lighting.
- Provide clear written and illustrated instructions to ensure quality work.
- Ensure that table is stable.
- Provide leg space for easy leg movement.
- Provide a footrest, especially for seated workers.

#### Costs: \$

\$ Low cost   \$\$ Moderate cost   \$\$\$ High cost

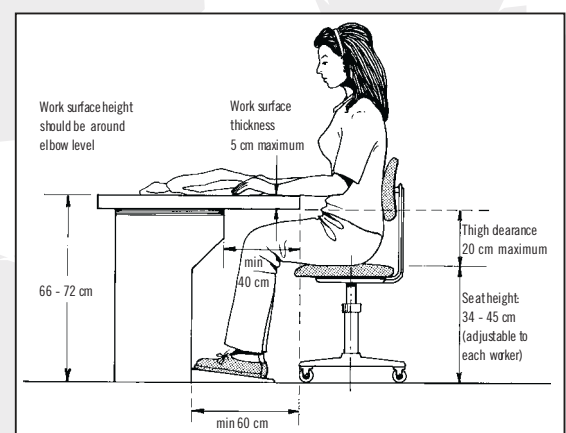


Figure 2

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## Good Practices

### Rubbish/Waste Collection

A clean workplace can help to achieve better productivity and protects worker's health and safety. Factories should establish systems to make sure that waste is continuously cleared up and that the workplace is kept safe, healthy and hygienic at all times.

#### Good practices for rubbish collection

- Use rubbish bins to collect waste in the factory.
- Sewing machine scraps can be collected directly into a bin below the sewing table.
- Make a hole in the sewing table and connect it to a bin below with an adjustable slide (Figure 1).
- Designate specific rubbish bins to individual machines (Figure 2).
- Post signs to show where rubbish bins are located.

#### Benefits

- ✓ Improves productivity.
- ✓ Promotes good health and safety practices amongst workers.
- ✓ Develops good housekeeping habits.
- ✓ Helps to eliminate waste and workers take pride in cleanliness of factory.

#### How

- Use baskets/bins where appropriate in all working areas.
- Encourage workers to develop good habits even during busy periods.
- Encourage workers to always keep the workplace clean.

**Costs: \$**

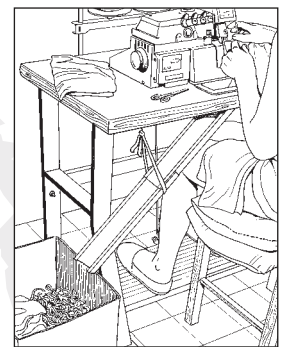


Figure 1

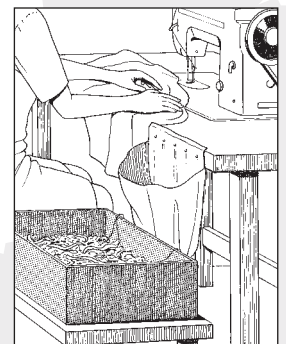


Figure 2

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices Spot Cleaning Area

Spot cleaning is necessary in garment manufacturing, but some of the chemicals used can be dangerous. It is necessary to protect people who work in or near the spot cleaning area from chemicals, including chemical fumes. In particular, Trichloroethylene, a toxic chemical commonly used in spot cleaning, needs special care. It can cause harm if it is breathed in or if it touches the skin.

### Good practices for store organisation

- Use a special room in a separate location for the spot cleaning area.
- Use water and detergent for spot cleaning instead of chemicals whenever possible.
- Make sure that workers read and understand Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) so that they learn about the dangers of the chemicals being used. If workers cannot read, ensure that workers understand the dangers of chemicals.
- Ensure that the spot cleaning room has clean air at all times by fitting fans and installing fume captors where the fumes are located. Ensure sufficient fume caption per minute.
- Install exhaust ventilation fans in the spot cleaning area to make sure that clean air flows towards the workers and chemical fumes flow away from the workers.  
**Caution:** *the air must not flow towards the worker's face or they will breathe in the chemical* (Figure 1).
- After taking all possible measures to improve the working environment, provide workers with proper personal protective equipment such as masks, overalls, gloves and safety goggles. **Caution:** *Dust masks are not suitable as they trap the chemical over the worker's face* (Figure 2).

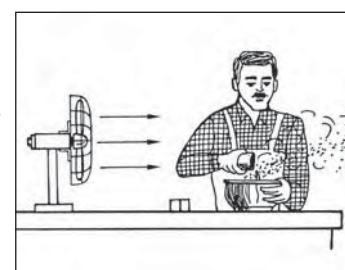


Figure 1



Figure 2

### Benefits

- ✓ Protects workers from direct and indirect exposure to spot cleaning chemicals.
- ✓ Protects workers from getting sick - including short and long-term diseases.
- ✓ Saves cost of medical treatment.
- ✓ Minimizes absenteeism from sickness.
- ✓ Safer working environment.

### How

- Display this Guide and MSDS on the walls of the spot cleaning room.
- Purchase personal protective equipment such as gloves and overalls in local markets.
- Purchase safety goggles and filter respirator masks (for gases and solvents) in commercial markets.
- Find out if any of the chemical products used can be replaced by water and detergent.
- Train workers on proper safety procedures and make sure they know about the hazards associated with the materials they are working using.

### Costs: \$

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Spot Cleaning Operations

Because spot-cleaning chemicals can be dangerous, spot cleaning operations should be kept separate from the main production area. Workers who use spot cleaning chemicals should be given safety equipment and clothing. Factories which have good spot cleaning operations can save money by reducing absenteeism and improving the health and morale of workers. A safe factory can also help to increase sales because working conditions are important to many garment buyers.

#### Good practices for spot cleaning operations

- Use water and detergent for spot cleaning instead of chemicals whenever possible.
- After taking all possible measures to improve the working environment, provide spot cleaning workers with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves, safety goggles, masks and overalls.
- Many factories use spot cleaning chemicals, which contain *trichloroethylene*. *Trichloroethylene* is toxic and can cause serious harm. It is especially important that workers wear correct PPE to prevent them from touching or breathing in this chemical (Figures 1 & 2).
- Ensure that workers are educated on how to properly handle chemicals. Material Safety Data Sheets must be provided in language the workers understand.
- Make sure workers and medical staff know what to do in case dangerous chemicals get spilled or a worker gets injured. Workers must wash themselves after the use of chemicals.
- Make sure workers know how to properly dispose of chemicals.
- DO NOT expose pregnant women or women who breast-feed their children to dangerous chemicals such as *trichloroethylene*.



Figure 1



Figure 2

#### Benefits

- ✓ Safer and healthier working environment.
- ✓ Protection of workers' health.
- ✓ Workers are happier when they no longer have to tolerate unpleasant smells, headaches or irritation to eyes and skin.
- ✓ Minimises health risks of long term exposure to chemicals.
- ✓ Reduces absenteeism due to medical conditions.
- ✓ Improves productivity.

#### How

- Purchase necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Train workers on safety procedures and emergency response in case of accidental chemical absorption.
- Find out if any of the chemical products used can be replaced by water and detergent.

**Costs: \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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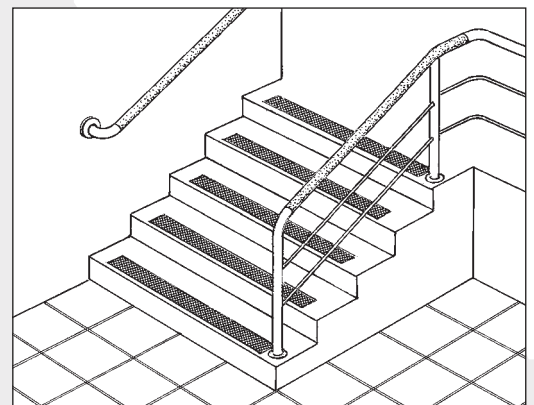
## Good Practices

### Stairway Safety

Stairways can be dangerous but a few simple precautions can make them much safer. Make sure that stairways are large enough and are not blocked or slippery. Stairways need to be large enough for large groups of people to use in case of an emergency evacuation such as a fire.

#### Good practices for stairway safety

- Stairs should have non-stick 'treading' to prevent people from slipping (See figure).
- Stairs should have handrails for support.
- Stairs should be large enough for easy access and wide enough to allow two-way access.
- Make sure that there are enough stairways in case of an emergency such as a fire.
- Stairways need good lighting; otherwise workers may trip and injure themselves.
- Schedule regular fire drills so employees get accustomed to using stairs in an emergency situation in an orderly fashion.
- Use ramps instead of stairways where applicable. Ensure that the ramp incline is less than 15 degrees.



#### Benefits

- ✓ Safe stairways allow easy access in cases of emergency.
- ✓ Reduces accidents resulting from slipping and falling.
- ✓ Easier and more efficient movement of materials from one floor to another.

#### How

- Renovate existing stairs to implement these good practice guidelines if needed.
- Bring these issues to the building contractor when building new factories and expanding or renovating old ones.
- When building stairs, each stair should be the same height and depth.
- Schedule regular fire drills so employees get accustomed to using stairs in an emergency situation in an orderly fashion.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

If you have any questions, contact the Better Work team at [info@betterwork.org](mailto:info@betterwork.org)



# Good Practices

## Stock Control of the Garment Trims Store

Garment factories invest a huge amount of money in fabric. A well organised warehouse and an inventory system which labels and tracks all stock helps to manage this inventory investment, improves productivity and reduces costs. Please also refer to the Good Practice Guides for Fabric Storage and Store Organisation.

### Good practices for the garment trims store

- Classify and label all old and current stock (Figure 1).
- If stock is not used, get rid of it.
- Label the trims and classify them by item type (Figure 2).
- Use and display bin cards for all fabrics. Bin cards also make it easier when ordering and conducting stock-take (Figure 3).
- Keep track of which stock was used in which production run and the date it was used.

### Benefits

- ✓ Increases productivity by reducing the amount of time needed to search for fabric and conduct stock-take.
- ✓ Reduces costs by preventing unnecessary ordering.
- ✓ Reduces costs by decreasing the risk of stock being damaged by being stored poorly or stolen.
- ✓ Makes inventory ordering quicker and easier.
- ✓ Makes it possible to produce garments from the same fabric batch which ensures consistency of colour and fabric quality.

### How

- Train staff to understand the labeling process.
- Ensure that labeling is consistent.

**Costs: \$**

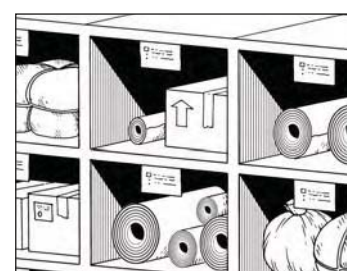


Figure 1

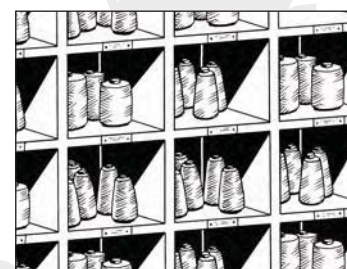


Figure 2



Figure 3

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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## Good Practices

### Store Organisation

Because garment factories make a large investment in materials it is necessary to store and organise this inventory in an efficient, safe and secure way. A well organised store helps to make a more productive factory, protects stock from being damaged, and saves money and time when ordering and conducting stock-take.

#### Good practices for store organisation

- Build a racking system and put boards at both ends of each rack for identification.
- Use a logical identification system for organising the racks. For example, put numbers, letters (or a combination) on each row (Figure 1).
- Put frequently used stock in easily accessible locations.
- Attach a 'bin card' to each fabric roll. A bin card is used to record the balance of the fabric (Figures 2).
- Invest in high quality ladders. They will save time and protect the welfare of your staff.
- Teach workers how the storage system works, and train them on the usage of ladders, forklifts and machine safety.

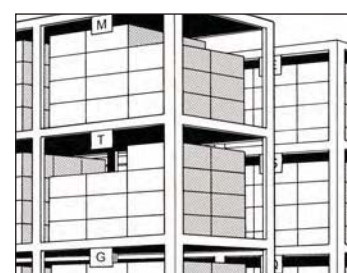


Figure 1

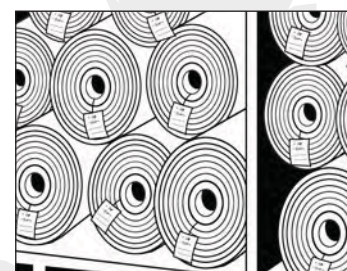


Figure 2

#### Benefits

- ✓ Improves productivity.
- ✓ Reduces risk of materials being damaged, lost or stolen.
- ✓ Presents a positive image of the factory.
- ✓ Reduces the risk of over-ordering materials.
- ✓ Stock-take is quicker and more efficient.
- ✓ Ensures a safer workplace.

#### How

- Store staff can design or build.
- High quality racking systems can be purchased and fitted to your store.

**Costs: \$ – \$\$**

\$ Low cost    \$\$ Moderate cost    \$\$\$ High cost

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# Good Practices

## Store Room Safety: Stack Height

To make the factory safer and more productive, storage areas need to be efficiently and safely organised. Make sure that all boxes and materials are properly stacked and that the height of stacks is restricted and monitored.

### Good practices for safe stacking in the store room

- Mark the maximum stack height using wooden guide poles (Figure 1).
- Or, paint red lines on the wall to indicate safe stacking height (Figure 2).
- Regularly check that boxes are stacked tidily and boxes or materials are not stacked above the marked height.
- Never stack in front of emergency exits or in front of windows or electrical panels.

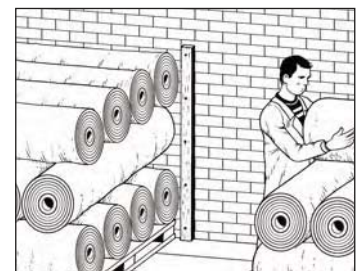


Figure 1

### Benefits

- ✓ Improves the image of workplace.
- ✓ Creates a safer workplace.
- ✓ Reduces workplace accidents.
- ✓ Enhances awareness of safe practices.
- ✓ Improves the efficiency of the storeroom.

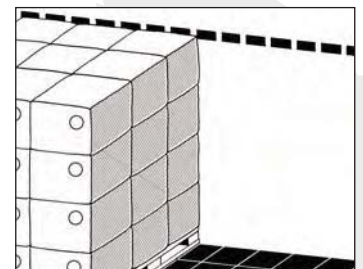


Figure 2

### How

- Use pieces of wood as markers; or
- Paint a line to show the maximum stack height.
- Stack materials and boxes in areas that do not obstruct airflow or movement within the factory.

**Costs:** \$

\$ Low cost   \$\$ Moderate cost   \$\$\$ High cost

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