



International
Labour
Organization

Improving welfare

Working conditions



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Factory Improvement Toolset

The Factory Improvement Toolset (FIT) is an innovative self-facilitated, activity-based learning approach designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to create more decent and sustainable employment. FIT supports manufacturers in global supply chains to improve productivity, competitiveness and working conditions by upgrading production systems and factory practices.

FIT has been developed to be a sustainable, time- and cost-efficient option for supporting factories to enhance productivity through improved business practices and working conditions. FIT focuses on areas of production improvement and actions to be taken specific to each participating factory. It can be utilized as stand-alone learning tools or to complement other training programmes.

With each module lasting no more than 2.5 hours, FIT enables factories to train personnel, whilst minimizing interference with production realities. The easy-to-use methodology makes it possible to rapidly scale the implementation to reach a large cohort of trainees across multiple production facilities.

Working in small groups, participants review real-life situations and engage in discussions to determine improvements to be made in factory without an external trainer or specialist. This self-facilitated, activity-based and highly participatory learning approach positions participants as both student and teacher and makes the toolset self-tailored to the needs and interests of each group.

About this module

This FIT module on Improving welfare is a basic training for garment manufacturers to become familiar with strategies to improve working conditions. Participants will learn about different welfare-related topics and how they can improve staff welfare in their factory. This module takes about 2 hours to complete.

Upon completion of the training, participants should have:

- Understood the meaning of staff welfare and its significance for their own factory.
- Learnt about different areas of staff welfare, including water and sanitation, emergency preparedness, and worker facilities.
- Set goals to improve working conditions by improving staff welfare in all areas.

The **Factory Improvement Toolset** of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** are developed and provided by the ILO's **Enterprises Department**.

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Guidelines for successfully using the training tool

Read out-loud

The FIT tool is designed for participants to take turns reading the instructions in the modules out loud to the group. At least one member of the group should be selected in the beginning of the session to take this responsibility.

Work as a group

Always work in groups of 5-7 during a FIT session. The programme will not be successful if participants work independently or do not collaborate with each other.

Be active

Encourage everyone in the group to actively contribute to the discussion. Ensure that no group member dominates the discussion or does not participate at all.

Monitor the time

Select one member of the group to monitor the time for each activity and remind the group when it is time to move to the next exercise.

Complete the action plan

Complete the action plan at the end of the session. This will help ensure that FIT results in improvements in the factory. Review the plan a while after the session to make sure that actions in the plan has been completed accordingly.

Icons

A set of icons is used throughout the modules to provide easy to recognize reference points for different tasks within each session and activity.



Read out loud

One member of the group should read out loud to the rest of group.



Knowledge link

Knowledge and skills are linked to other FIT learning resources and support.



Time allotted

Indicates how much time each sessions and activity should take.



Supplies needed

Indicates that supplies may be necessary to complete the session.



Begin step-by-step instructions

Indicates that the step-by-step instructions for an activity are beginning.



Think about it

Indicates additional information for the participants to think about.

Measuring your performance

Measuring operational efficiency is a key aspect of running a productive factory. The box(es) below guides you in understanding which measurement indicator(s) can be used to measure and evaluate the performance of your factory in relation to the topic of this FIT module.

Indicator 1	Workers' perception of the quality of welfare in the factory
Definition	Your workers' opinion on how good they find welfare (water, sanitation, worker facilities such as the canteen and the sick room) in the factory.
Purpose	To understand your workers' opinion and situation, and identify what can be done to improve welfare in your factory.
Calculation	Have your workers fill out the simple online survey (provided by the ILO – ask your FIT focal point for more information), and consult the results. Don't forget that surveys should be anonymous!
Frequency	Calculate every 6 months, or once a year.
Responsible	HR manager / OSH manager

Indicator 2	Turnover rate (%)
Definition	The amount of employees who leave the factory over a period of time and must be replaced, as a percentage of the total amount of employees.
Purpose	To understand how high your turnover rate is, set a turnover reduction target, and identify solutions to reduce turnover in your factory.
Calculation	$\left(\frac{\text{\# of employees who left and must be replaced}}{\text{average \# of employees}} \right) \times 100\%$ <p>Note: $\text{Average \# of employees} = \frac{\text{\# of employees at the start of the time period} + \text{\# of employees at the end of the time period}}{2}$</p>
Frequency	Calculate monthly.
Responsible	HR manager



Session 1

Business case study

Goals

Preparing you for the type of discussions you will have with other group members throughout the learning module and understanding the benefits of being exposed to different perspectives.

Understanding better why improving welfare is important to improve working conditions and productivity in the factory.

Session 1

Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



15 minutes



Learning manual, pens, markers and poster paper

A business case study presents a real-life situation for learners to reflect on and discuss with other group members. By discussing the case, students learn from others' ideas and perspectives, and develop an understanding of the topic at hand within the workplace.



One group member reads the case study out loud



The whole group discusses the case study



Everyone develops a deeper understanding of the topic

Activities

Activity

1



15 minutes

Case study review and respond

The case study below presents a situation that could happen in real life.



Instructions:

- 1) As a group, listen to one member read the case study below while following along in your learning module.

Thy is a new HR manager at the HS garment factory. The factory invests very little in staff welfare. Staff facilities such as lockers are too few for the number of staff at the factory, the lavatories and eating areas are dirty and a health risk, and staff do not have access to first aid or clean drinking water while they are working. As a result, staff are not very invested in their work, turnover is high, and there is often a drop in productivity when it is hot and humid. Most women also choose not to come to work during their period because of the lack of hygiene and clean toilets.

To solve the issues, Thy sets up a housekeeping unit and cleaning checklists to ensure all staff areas are cleaned regularly and thoroughly. She also ensures that safe drinking water is provided for staff in clean containers near their workstations, so they can stay hydrated. Thy prepares the factory for emergencies by purchasing first aid kits, fire safety equipment, and organizing evacuation drills in case of fire or earthquake. Then, she improves staff facilities by making low-cost changes to the rest and eating areas, adding lockers, benches, tables, and plants.

Thanks to these changes, workers feel more appreciated, respected and motivated with their work. This increases factory productivity and reduces staff turnover. Thanks to the new, low-cost investments in staff welfare, HS garment factory becomes a better place to work for everyone.

- 2) Together, discuss Thy's situation by answering the three questions in table 1 on the next page.

Table 1. Questions about Thy's situation

1. What problems did Thy identify in the factory?

2. What does Thy do or change in order to solve these problems?

3. What are the results of Thy's solutions for the factory and its workers?

This page has been intentionally left blank and can be used for note taking.



Session 2

Learning about the topic

Goals

Understanding what staff welfare is and its significance for workers and the factory as a whole.

Discussing and identifying water and sanitation improvements that can be made to benefit staff welfare.

Identifying ways to improve staff welfare by becoming better prepared for emergencies in the factory.

Identifying potential investments in staff facilities that would improve the work environment.

Session 2

Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



90 minutes



Learning manual, pens, and markers

Employee welfare are the things that the factory provides in order to improve staff wellbeing and motivate employees. During each working day, staff need to drink water, eat meals and snacks, wash their hands and visit a toilet. During emergencies, staff will need to receive first aid or leave the building quickly and safely. These activities can be easy, comfortable and safe, or dangerous, painful and degrading, depending on staff welfare quality. In this training module, you will learn how to improve staff welfare by working on the three topics below.

Improving **water and sanitation**

Preparing for **emergencies**

Improving **worker facilities**

First, you will learn what welfare is and why it is important for workers and the factory. Then, you will discuss the importance of providing hygienic water and sanitation in your factory, and how to better prepare for emergencies by investing in equipment and training. Finally, you will discuss low cost options to improve staff facilities in the factory.

Activities

Activity

2a



25 minutes

Welfare in your factory

Good employee welfare is essential to the factory. Improving staff welfare improves worker attendance, job satisfaction, motivation, health and productivity. In this activity, you will learn about what staff welfare is, and why it is important for your factory.



Instructions:

1) Together, discuss:

- What could be the benefits of treating workers well (providing good welfare) for the factory?
- What could be the consequences of not treating workers well (no or bad welfare) for the factory?
- Do you think staff welfare is important for your factory to think about?

2) Together, look at the forms of staff welfare in table 2, and label the five most important forms of staff welfare (1-5) in your opinion. List any other forms of welfare that you can think of at the bottom.

3) Together, discuss: Do you think women and men workers may have different welfare needs? If so, what needs?

4) Together, work through the self-assessment in table 3 to identify what your factory could do to improve welfare. Discuss and summarize key improvements that could be made in your factory.



A garment factory can be a community where workers are loyal, with high morale and high productivity, or a place where workers look for the first opportunity to leave and care little about the owner's success. **By investing in welfare** in your factory, you show that you care about workers. Such investments can be very low-cost.

Table 2. Forms of staff welfare

Welfare forms	1-5
The provision of boiling water for coffee or tea breaks.	
Child care services and equipment (e.g. nursing room).	
Clean drinking water provided near work stations.	
A canteen that provides good lunches for free, or at reasonable prices.	
Interest-free loans or payment advances for important/urgent expenditures.	
Clean and professional-looking uniforms.	
Adequate lighting in workspaces and in exterior areas such as car parks.	
Quality first aid equipment and procedures.	
Separate changing rooms for women and men providing enough privacy.	
A sufficient amount of lockers for staff to store belongings.	
Recreational areas and sports facilities and equipment.	
Three guaranteed breaks throughout the day.	
Wash basins with soap for workers to wash their hands.	
Medical facilities such as an infirmary and basic care.	
A sufficient amount of clean toilets, separate for women and men.	
Staff events such as holiday celebrations or staff birthdays.	
Other examples you can think of:	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Table 3. Self-assessment

Questions	Response	
1. Is there provision of an adequate supply of clean and safe drinking water in the workplace?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is there provision of clean sanitary facilities close to the work area, with soap and separate toilets for women?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is there a separate, comfortable and hygienic place for workers to have meals?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Is there a well-stocked first-aid box / kit located on each floor and clearly marked?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Is there at least one person trained in first-aid treatment available during working hours?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Is there adequate fire safety equipment in the factory, for example smoke alarms or fire extinguishers?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is there a person responsible for evacuating the building quickly and safely in case of emergency?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is there a safe place to store hazardous chemicals, away from staff work areas?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>



Personal hygiene in the factory is particularly important for women – and especially for menstruating, pregnant or nursing women. This includes forms of welfare such as:

- A sufficient number of clean toilets, separate for women
- Wash basins with soap in or by the toilets
- Provision of cheap sanitary products such as sanitary pads

Activity

2b



20 minutes

Improving water and sanitation

Water and sanitation facilities are extremely important considerations in your factory. Investing in water and sanitation will reduce sickness, fatigue, and maintain staff health and motivation. In this activity, you will learn about the importance of providing clean and safe water, and sanitation facilities and services for staff welfare.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, discuss: Why is it important to have clean toilets and to provide safe drinking water in your factory?
- 2) Together, look at the list of nine consequences of poor water and sanitation in table 4. Circle the number if you think this consequence is severe. Then, underline it if it has happened in your factory.
- 3) Together, work through the good practices in table 5 to identify good water and sanitation practices that already take place in your factory. Discuss areas where your factory hasn't done so well.

Table 4. Consequences of poor water and sanitation

- | |
|---|
| 1. Greater spread of disease due to dirty bathrooms and no provision of soap. |
| 2. Workers become dehydrated quickly without water and fall ill. |
| 3. Workers feel that their wellbeing and dignity does not matter to the factory. |
| 4. Greater difficulty attracting skilled workers due to the lack of hygiene. |
| 5. Lower productivity, especially on hot and humid days. |
| 6. More injuries due to unsafe facilities such as slippery floors in wet bathrooms. |
| 7. Higher staff turnover due to lack of hygiene (e.g. for menstruating women). |
| 8. Sexual harassment more likely when male / female toilets are not separate. |
| 9. Loss of time due to workers having to queue to use the lavatories. |



Separate **toilets** for men and women are strongly encouraged and the law of your country must be followed, but the following are the minimum requirements for sanitation:

- One toilet for up to 5 men and two toilets for 6 to 40 men.
- One toilet for up to 5 women and two toilets for 6 to 30 women.
- One wash basin for every 15 workers.

Table 5. Good water and sanitation practices

In our factory we already....



Have clean and safe drinking water available to staff (purchased / boiled / or treated to avoid contamination).	
Have drinking water containers / taps / fountains attended by a designated person ensuring that water is replaced regularly to avoid it becoming unhygienic.	
Provide boiling water for hot beverages.	
Have a sufficient number of toilets for all staff, and separate toilets for men and women.	
Ensure that toilets are cleaned so that they are safer and do not spread diseases or illnesses.	
Ensure that bins are provided in female toilets for the disposal of sanitary items.	
Make sure that toilets have sufficient lighting and ventilation, and toilet paper or water is provided.	
Important sanitation items such as sanitary pads, soap and toothbrushes are provided for sale for a cheap price.	
Place water containers near each group of workers in a central place to minimize the time it takes to go get a drink.	
Ensure that an electric hand dryer, sanitary napkins or fresh towels are provided for staff to dry their hands with.	
Avoid placing drinking water in washrooms or toilets, near machines or other hazards, or in places where it can be contaminated by dust, chemicals or others.	
Having “safe drinking water” signs to differentiate potable from non-potable water.	
Have toilets conveniently located to avoid long walks and waiting times.	

Activity

2c



20 minutes

Preparing for emergencies

Considering your workers' welfare means that you also have to **prepare for emergencies**. This includes providing emergency equipment and conducting safety and evacuation drills. In this activity, you will learn how you can improve staff welfare in your factory by preparing for emergencies.



Instructions:

- 1) Have a participant read aloud the text box below. Then, discuss:
 - Do you have a system and the proper equipment to deal with accidents and emergencies in your factory?
 - Has your factory ever needed to be evacuated? Do you have an evacuation procedure?
- 2) Have a participant read aloud the two scenarios in table 6. Then, together, answer the two questions below the scenarios.
- 3) Together, look at the emergency checklist in table 7. Put a tick (✓) or a cross (X) to identify whether you have access to this equipment in your factory, or whether you undertake these drills or trainings.



Garment factories should always be prepared for **emergencies**, such as fires, earthquakes, and building collapses. Garment factories should also be prepared to deal with **accidents and injuries** like cuts and bruises, eye injuries, burns, poisoning and electric shocks to ensure staff wellbeing during accidents and emergencies.



Efforts made to be better prepared for emergencies should be part of a larger Safety & Health system to identify hazards and prevent accidents from happening. To learn more, ask for the "Introduction to health & safety" module!

Table 6. Scenarios

Scenario A	Scenario B
<p>A fire breaks out at factory A. Staff try to put the fire out with fire extinguishers, but it reaches a chemical storage cupboard. Staff choose to avoid the risk of injury from explosions or inhalation by evacuating the building. Smoke alarms signal for staff to leave the building through the pre-planned exits that are kept clean and clear. A sprinkler system has also been installed to prevent the spread of the fire. One person in charge of each floor checks that everyone has left the building, and no one remains inside. Everyone is then accounted for at the designated meeting point and injuries treated with a first aid kit.</p>	<p>A fire breaks out at factory B. Staff try to put out the fire by pouring water on it and hitting it with towels, but the fire gets out of hand and people are injured trying to put it out. Staff begin to panic and leave in a hurry, and some people begin pushing and shoving as everyone tries to leave through the same exit. The factory becomes filled with smoke and some people are still stuck inside the building, but no one knows how many are left inside. By the time the emergency services arrive to put out the fire, many people have been injured and killed and the fire is widespread, costing the factory thousands of dollars.</p>

Discussion questions

1. What did factory A do right? What were the results?

2. What did factory B do wrong? What were the results?



Accidents can happen even if preventive measures are in place. Every factory should maintain well-stocked **first aid kits** in each unit, in a readily available place. Kits must include: Sterile bandages, dressings (gauze pads), slings, medical tape, cotton wool for cleaning wounds, scissors, tweezers (for splinters), an eye bath and eye wash, an antiseptic solution, over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin.



Ask your instructor for the sample evacuation procedure. All factories should have their own evacuation procedures. You should then display the procedure visibly and train staff in following it.

Table 7. Preparing for emergencies

Accidents and injuries – In our factory we...		✓
Organize first aid trainings – at least 2 staff per unit are trained.		
Have access to first aid kits (well-stocked and frequently replenished).		
Do trainings on how to identify hazards and avoid accidents in each unit.		
Have the names and phone numbers of those trained in first aid made available to staff on a notice board.		
Hold trainings on knowing, understanding and respecting first aid procedures.		
Have a stretcher available for moving people with serious injuries.		
Have the contact numbers of the closest doctors or clinics and emergency services (or taxis) for transportation.		
Fire emergencies and evacuations: In our factory we...		✓
Provide fire extinguishers.		
Practice fire safety drills (e.g. how to use an extinguisher).		
Practice building evacuations using designated emergency exits.		
Provide smoke alarms.		
Have installed sprinklers.		
Have a list of the names of all staff in each unit for head checks.		
Establish contact with the local emergency services, and discuss arrival times for ambulances or fire engines.		
Have maps of fire exit routes and meeting areas and clearly indicated emergency exits.		
Have a list of important numbers for emergency services (ambulance, hospital, firefighters).		

Activity

2d



25 minutes

Improving welfare facilities

Investing in staff **welfare facilities** can have a big impact on attracting and retaining staff in your factory. Paying attention to workers' needs and investing in facilities such as rest areas sets your business apart and helps you gain cooperation and support from workers. In this activity, you will learn to improve welfare by investing in staff facilities.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, brainstorm: What facilities are important to improve welfare and create a supportive and welcoming work environment for workers? Write down your ideas in table 8.
- 2) Together, read through the list of staff welfare facilities in table 9. For each example, decide whether this could be applied to your factory to improve welfare (✓), already occurs in your factory (=), or whether it is not applicable to your factory (X).
- 3) Together, for each facility that you ticked ✓ in the list, discuss: How could you set up or improve this facility in a cheap yet sustainable way? Remember: Investing in welfare needs not be expensive!
- 4) Together, discuss: Which facilities are especially important for women, and why? What could happen if you do not provide such facilities? Then, together, read the text box below table 9.

Table 8. Brainstorming: Welfare facilities

Example: A parking lot.

What facilities are important?

Table 9. Improving welfare facilities

Worker facilities and services	✓ = X
1. Creating / improving staff uniforms so that they are neat and well-designed, making staff feel proud of the company they're working for.	
2. Establish a canteen service that delivers sufficient, nutritious food during lunch breaks for a low price.	
3. Provide a comfortable, clean eating area with tables and chairs where staff can eat their food.	
4. Provide lockers and changing rooms where staff can get changed into, and out of their uniforms and safely store their belongings. One changing room should be provided for each sex.	
5. Provide washing basins next to the changing room for staff to get clean at the end of their shifts.	
6. Provide staff with ten-minute breaks in the morning and afternoon to ensure staff do not become tired and fatigued. Short breaks are better for productivity than continuous work!	
7. Provide staff with a rest area with benches so that staff can get away from their workstation during their breaks and relax.	
8. Provide staff with an infirmary where staff are provided with basic healthcare or care for small injuries, and with beds for ill staff to rest. Beds should be separated for men and women.	
9. Organize regular doctor and nurse visits and health check-up or health information sessions to improve overall staff hygiene and health.	
10. If your factory is too small for an infirmary, assist in establishing a community health service nearby, grant salary advances to help meet medical costs, or provide health insurance to all workers.	
11. Provide shared private shuttles to help with transporting staff home to help reduce delays and absenteeism.	

12.	If you are unable to do so, introduce flexible working hours, transportation allowances, or work on public transportation services with local authorities.	
13.	Allow workers to celebrate their birthdays together during their lunch hours or on the last Friday afternoon of the month.	
14.	Organize staff participation in company activities or sports teams, or encourage recreational activities by providing equipment (e.g. soccer ball and nets) and space for games, music, or other activities.	
15.	Provide staff with a childcare facility, such as a clean room with toys, items of simple furniture, and hire someone to care for the children at a low cost. Children should never be allowed inside the factory.	
16.	Provide a small prayer room for religious workers who wish to pray during breaks.	
17.	Celebrating important holidays with the workers (e.g. New Year or Eid).	



Women are likely to make up the majority of your workforce. Pregnant or nursing women are also more likely to leave the factory – for instance if it is dirty, too difficult to access, or to take care of their baby and family. Improving hygiene and making investments in facilities such as childcare facilities, nursing rooms, transportation, on-site infirmaries, clean rest areas and others, will encourage these women to stay with the factory, and reduce turnover.



Session 3

Your action plan

Goals

Summarizing and revising the new knowledge gained.

Identifying concrete applications of the new knowledge that benefit your factory.

Session 3

Overview



One member should read the full session out loud to the rest of group



20 minutes



Learning manual, pens, and markers

Throughout this module you have gained knowledge about importance of improving staff welfare through investing in water and sanitation, emergency preparedness and factory facilities.

Improving **water and sanitation**

Preparing for **emergencies**

Improving **worker facilities**

In this session you will think of ways to apply your new knowledge by reviewing best practices and drafting your own welfare action plan.



A sample factory evacuation procedure is available online for you to print out and use in your own factory. To obtain it, contact your factory's FIT coordinator!

Activities

Activity

3a



5 minutes

Best practices checklist

In this activity, you will review best welfare practices as a next step for evaluating your own and implementing improvements.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, look at the list of best practices in table 10, and put a ✓ in the column on the right if you use these practices in your factory.

Table 10. Improving welfare

Best practices	✓
1. Welfare services, facilities and benefits available are clearly communicated to and understood by your employees.	
2. Factory management works to improve sanitation practices and facilities, and provides drinking water and a sufficient amount of lavatories.	
3. Employees have access to emergency equipment (e.g. first aid kits, fire extinguishers), and know what to do in case of disaster or accident.	
4. Factory management sets up an action plan to improve staff facilities in the factory and create a welcoming work environment.	
5. There is at least one person within the management team responsible for implementing welfare initiatives and monitoring the quality of welfare.	

Activity

3b



15 minutes

Your action plan

In this activity, you will think of ways to apply your new knowledge to improve welfare in your factory by drafting your own action plan.



Instructions:

- 1) Together, fill in the action plan (table 11) on the next page. Identify a key problem that you want to solve and write down the solutions you identified while working on this module.



When setting up your welfare action plan, **consult with women workers** to ensure that their specific needs are taken into account and properly addressed.

Table 11. Improving welfare – Action Plan

Problem identified				
Solutions identified	Action(s) to be taken	Person responsible	By when?	How will improvements be measured?

Improving welfare

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FIT is being piloted in Asia under the regional Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia project funded by the Government of Sweden.

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