

Complaint – Suit Supply– China

Status: Closed

FWF is responsible for setting up a complaints procedure in production countries where FWF is active. The complaints procedure allows third parties to make complaints about the working conditions or the way the Code of Labour Practices is implemented in factories which supply FWF members.

The responsibility of FWF includes investigating the complaint, verifying whether the agreed corrective action plan is implemented and public reporting. This complaint report gives an overview of a complaint filed to FWF, the investigation and agreed corrective action plan as well as how the outcome is verified. For more information on the complaints procedure see the FWF website. FWF also publishes an overview of complaints received in its annual reports.

1. Member company involved

Suit Supply

2. Accused party

A factory located in China supplying Suit Supply.

3. Date of receiving complaint

29 August 2017

4. Filing party

A worker that is currently employed by the factory.

5. The complaint

The complainant claimed that the factory had shortened the lunch hour from 1 hour to 20 to 30 minutes on the ground that the fuel for the boiler has been changed to diesel oil by which the energy cost has increased a lot. Factory management did not want to waste the energy during the lunch hour. The complainant stated that the work is too burdensome if they do not have a nap after lunch. They would like to have their one hour lunch break back.

6. Admissibility

FWF decided that the case is admissible on August 30th.

The factory is an active supplier of Suit Supply, a member of FWF.

The case is relevant to the following labour standards of FWF's Code of Labour Practices:

- Reasonable hours of work
- Safe and healthy working conditions

7. Investigation

FWF informs Suit Supply about the case. Suit Supply contacted the supplier, who gave the following response:

The factory had indeed shortened lunch hour to 30 min due to boiler changes.

The reason is an enormous cost increase on the energy side due to change of current boilers to gas. The factory would have had till end of this year to change this and already requested a new gas boiler, but since the CN government changed this again to as soon as possible. Many factories are in a difficult position.

The factories are not allowed to use their current boilers, but since the application for gas takes 3 months that would mean or closing the factory for 3 months, or investigating another type of boiler until the gas boiler application would be approved.

The factory covers 3 big buildings including dorms so providing energy and changing to different systems twice means tens of thousands of euro's extra in an extreme short amount of time; it forced the factory to re-think their energy use since they had so to make so many investments.

One of the solutions was to test if they would cut lunch in half and let the workers leave 30 min earlier would help save a substantial amount of energy.

8. Findings and conclusions

The Chinese labour does not have specific stipulations on the required rest per day for garment workers.

The brand proposed some different solutions to the supplier, but since factory management already noticed themselves that it would affect the workers too much, they have already changed lunch back to one full hour.

9. Remediation

The case is closed.



10. Verification

The case is closed.

11. Evaluation by the complainant

The complainant confirmed that the lunch break was one hour again. The complainant was happy with the outcome.