

Clean Clothes Campaign

International Secretariat



The Bangladesh Safety Accord Update – 03.07.2014

With new companies signing the Accord the number of signatories has reached to 180 by June.

INSPECTION UPDATE

- More than 800 factories are inspected by the Accord engineers team for Fire, Structural and Building Safety by end of June.
- The Accord issued over 100 factory inspection reports to owners and brands to finalise Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) for those factories.
- The Accord published another 50 factory inspection reports for fire, electrical and structural safety with corrective action plans on June 25, 2014. More factory inspection reports are expected to be published soon.
- Regarding the inspection of common factories that produce garments for both Accord and Alliance signatory brands, retailers and buyers, the Accord is not inspecting the common units now. The Accord is in discussion with Alliance. The final decision is not taken about whether the commonly shared factories would be re-inspected by the Accord or not.

CRITICAL FINDINGS¹

- Accord structural engineers found 14 buildings are critically unsafe and require evacuation for remediation. Among these critical cases 4 factories remain closed, 7 are in operation with drastic load removal after subsequent determination and 3 factories are in the process of shifting. These 14 buildings accommodate a total of 23 garment units.
- Nearly 59 other factories have 'serious findings' which the Accord might not require the determination by the Review Panel as they are expecting those units to continue their production through immediate load removal.
- In the critical cases where the Review Panel has not been convened or functioned in the past month, the Accord has been engaging the signatory brands and the factory owners to ensure that production is suspended and relocated to a safe facility or to voluntarily suspend production and evacuate the building for serious safety reasons.
- Some factory owners followed the recommendation of the Accord inspection and shifted or suspended production in critically unsafe building. Others have suspended Accord brands production, but kept the operations running for non-Accord product. The Accord continues to try to convince the owners of these factories to voluntarily suspend operations and to press for the Review Panel visit the factory.
- *Florence Fashions Ltd.*, a factory on of the factory that is found“critical” by the Accord safety inspectors has suspended or made arrangements to produce the Accord brand production at other facilities. However, the factory continue to produce other, non - Accord products and have employees working in the same building that is unsafe for the workers. This information is disclosed to public by the Accord.

1 A “Critical finding” or “critical case” is one where the safety findings are to an extent that the engineers deem the factory building unsafe for production in its current state.

REVIEW PANEL²

- In recent months there were points of disagreement between the Accord, Alliance and BUET on the strength assumptions of concrete utilized for structural inspections. The Accord engaged in discussions with the Alliance and BUET facilitated by the ILO to reach a consensus on this specific issue. After thorough assessment of different sets of data and calculations by both Accord and BUET engineers, this issue is resolved by the Accord.

SAFETY TRAINING

- The Accord appointed Training Coordinator (TC) for Occupational Safety training will start at the beginning of July.
- The Accord is currently working on a safety training manual related to fire, electrical and building safety to be used for training of trainers.
- The focus of the Accord's training program will include: explanation of the democratic process of election of the committee, the roles and responsibilities of members, and confidence building measures to ensure that workers stand up for election in to the safety committee.
- The initial trainings are to focus on establishment of Occupational Health and Safety Committees in the factories as per the Accord provisions.
- After their establishment, the Accord training program will further focus on training of OHS Committee members to ensure a sustainable approach to health and safety in the factories.

WORKER COMMUNICATION

- The Accord plans to develop three informational videos featuring industry and labour 'actors', covering key components of the Accord, including the inspection process and the Safety Committees. These videos will be shown to workers in factories.
- The Accord has selected and trained "Field Resource People" from the IBC garment federations to play a key role in reaching out to workers.
- A 'pocket guide' in Bangla for workers on inspections, remediation and monitoring will be developed by the Accord and distributed through the Field Resource People.

GOVERNANCE

- The next Accord Steering Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on 10th July in Amsterdam.

2 *The GoB proposed Review Panel as the process for dealing with Accord, Alliance, and Ministry of Labour and Employment Inspections which recommend the full or partial suspension to production and evacuation of a factory building for remediation. The Review Panel composition is: 2 BUET Engineers, 1 Accord Engineer and 1 Alliance engineer.*