

Better Work Jordan Thematic Synthesis Report: Fire Safety

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International
Labour
Organization



**International
Finance Corporation**
World Bank Group

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Executive Summary

The Better Work programme, a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), worked in collaboration with local and international stakeholders to design Better Work Jordan, which was launched in February 2008. It was established at the request of the Government of Jordan which, along with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is a major donor.

The goal of the programme is to reduce poverty in Jordan by expanding decent work opportunities in the apparel sector. The programme also aims to improve competitiveness of the industry by enhancing economic performance at the enterprise level and by improving compliance with Jordanian labour law and the ILO's core labour standards.

In addition to the annual public synthesis reports that provide transparent information regarding working conditions in the factories participating in the programme, like all Better Work country programmes Better Work Jordan will produce a thematic synthesis report each year on a chosen theme with relevance to the national garment industry. This will allow the programme to look more in depth at relevant issues. This is the first such thematic report for Better Work Jordan with fire safety selected as the focus.

Since the inception of the programme, Better Work Jordan is not aware of any significant incidents with regards to factory fires. Over the past five years, fire safety practices in most garment factories have seen considerable improvement due to advisory services. According to the data, there are a few remaining concerns, which are generally related to the degree of commitment from individual factories to promote fire safety. These have to do with blockages of aisles and fire safety exits and factory escape routes that are not clearly marked. Assessments reveal that these are chronic issues in that a factory that was previously compliant may be found non-compliant in a subsequent visit. Better Work Jordan's advisory services will continue to emphasise putting in place functional OSH systems, as they are both required by the labor law and are likely to reduce non-compliance rates with these issues.

Although in recent years there have not been any reports of major incidents at workers' dormitories, Better Work Jordan is aware of a number of minor incidents, which suggests that fire safety risks are higher in dormitories than they are in factories. There are many reasons for this, the foremost of which being that dormitories are not regularly inspected by a government agency to ensure that they are safe and meet legal standards.

Over the next year, BWJ will work with stakeholders to improve dormitories standards generally and dormitory fire safety measures in particular. Of particular importance, BWJ will facilitate a multi-stakeholder discussion during for the purposed of agreeing on a mechanism for regular enforcement of the Ministry of Health regulation governing dormitory standards. In addition, we will encourage that garment factories be required to report to the Civil Defense Department all buildings in which their employees are living, irregardless of whether they own or lease the premises. Particular emphasis should be given to buildings being used as dormitories that were oriniginally constructed for another purpose. Finally, the administrations of industrial zones should keep up-to-date records of all dormitories used by factories to house workers. These records should be shared with the appropriate government authorities.

Section I: Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

The Better Work programme, a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), worked in collaboration with local and international stakeholders to design Better Work Jordan, which was launched in February 2008. It was established at the request of the Government of Jordan which, along with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is a major donor.

The goal of the programme is to reduce poverty in Jordan by expanding decent work opportunities in the apparel sector. The programme also aims to improve competitiveness of the industry by enhancing economic performance at the enterprise level and by improving compliance with Jordanian labour law and the ILO's core labour standards.

The apparel industry accounts for 17% of the country's total exports. Apparel exports, mostly to the United States, were exceeded \$1.3 billion in 2013 representing an increase of 10% over 2012. Exports grew by 14% during the first quarter of 2014. The garment sector mainly produces men's and women's apparel, ranging from jeans and sportswear to formal wear and undergarments. Most apparel factories are situated in 14 Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs), with the three largest QIZs located in Dulyal, Sahab and outside the country's second largest city of Irbid in the north. The export industry employs approximately 44,000 workers, over three quarters of whom are migrant workers mostly from South and South-East Asia. The majority of migrant workers originate from India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Women represent 63% of the labour force.

Currently 62 apparel factories participate in the Better Work Jordan programme representing over 95% of apparel exports and employing over 95% of the sector's labor force. The programme engages with these factories by conducting independent assessments and offering advisory and training services. As part of its mandate of sharing information with all programme stakeholders and encouraging continuous improvement, Better Work Jordan uses aggregate factory assessment data to produce one public synthesis report per year that reviews the performance of all participating factories in the reporting period.

Like all Better Work country programmes, as of 2013 Better Work Jordan will also produce a thematic synthesis report per year on a chosen theme with relevance to the national garment industry. This will allow the programme to look more in depth at relevant issues. This is the first such thematic report for Better Work Jordan with fire safety selected as the focus.

Better Work Methodology for Thematic Reports

Better Work carries out factory assessments to monitor compliance with international core labour standards and national labour law. Following an assessment, detailed findings are shared with the factory and its buyers. An aggregated industry-level report is issued once a year. In its factory and industry-level reports, Better Work highlights *non-compliance* findings. These findings are reported to help factories and other stakeholders easily identify areas in need of improvement. Collecting and reporting this data over time helps factories demonstrate their commitment to improving working conditions.

In individual factory compliance reports and the traditional synthesis reports, Better Work organizes reporting into eight areas, or clusters, of labour standards. The first four of the clusters are based on fundamental rights at work (Child Labour, Discrimination, Forced Labour and Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining), while the remaining four are based on national labour law relating to working conditions (Compensation, Contracts and Human Resources, Occupational Safety and Health and Working Time).

The theme explored in the present report is Fire Safety, comprising questions cutting across different subcategories under the **Occupational Safety and Health** cluster:

Table 1 Compliance Points and Questions

Chemicals and Hazardous Substances
Are chemicals and hazardous substances properly stored?
Emergency Preparedness
Are emergency exits and escape routes clearly marked and posted in the workplace?
Are flammable materials safely stored?
Are possible sources of ignition appropriately safeguarded?
Are the emergency exits accessible, unobstructed and unlocked during working hours, including overtime?
Are there enough emergency exits?
Does the employer conduct periodic emergency drills?
Does the workplace have a fire detection and alarm system?
Does the workplace have adequate fire-fighting equipment?
Has the employer appointed and trained a fire management team?
Has the employer trained an appropriate number of workers to use the fire-fighting equipment?
Worker Accommodation
Does the accommodation have adequate cooking facilities?
Has the employer adequately prepared for emergencies in the accommodation?
Is the accommodation protected against fire?
Worker Protection
Are electrical wires, switches and plugs properly installed, grounded, and maintained?
Does the employer have a certificate for the electrical installations in the factory?

In this thematic report, Better Work presents non-compliance findings at the question level. Answers to each questions are recorded in binary format, and then averaged across factories in consideration. For example, an average 100% non-compliance finding for the question pertaining to storage of chemicals and hazardous materials means that all participating factories were found to have a violation in that area.

Section II: Findings

This section presents non-compliance findings of questions identified in Table 1 for factories participating in Better Work Jordan. The findings are divided in two parts. Section 2.1 provides a snapshot of non-compliance findings for factories assessed between January 2013 and April 2014. Section 2.2 presents trends in non-compliance for the same set of questions over the entire duration of the programme for factories that have been assessed at least four times.

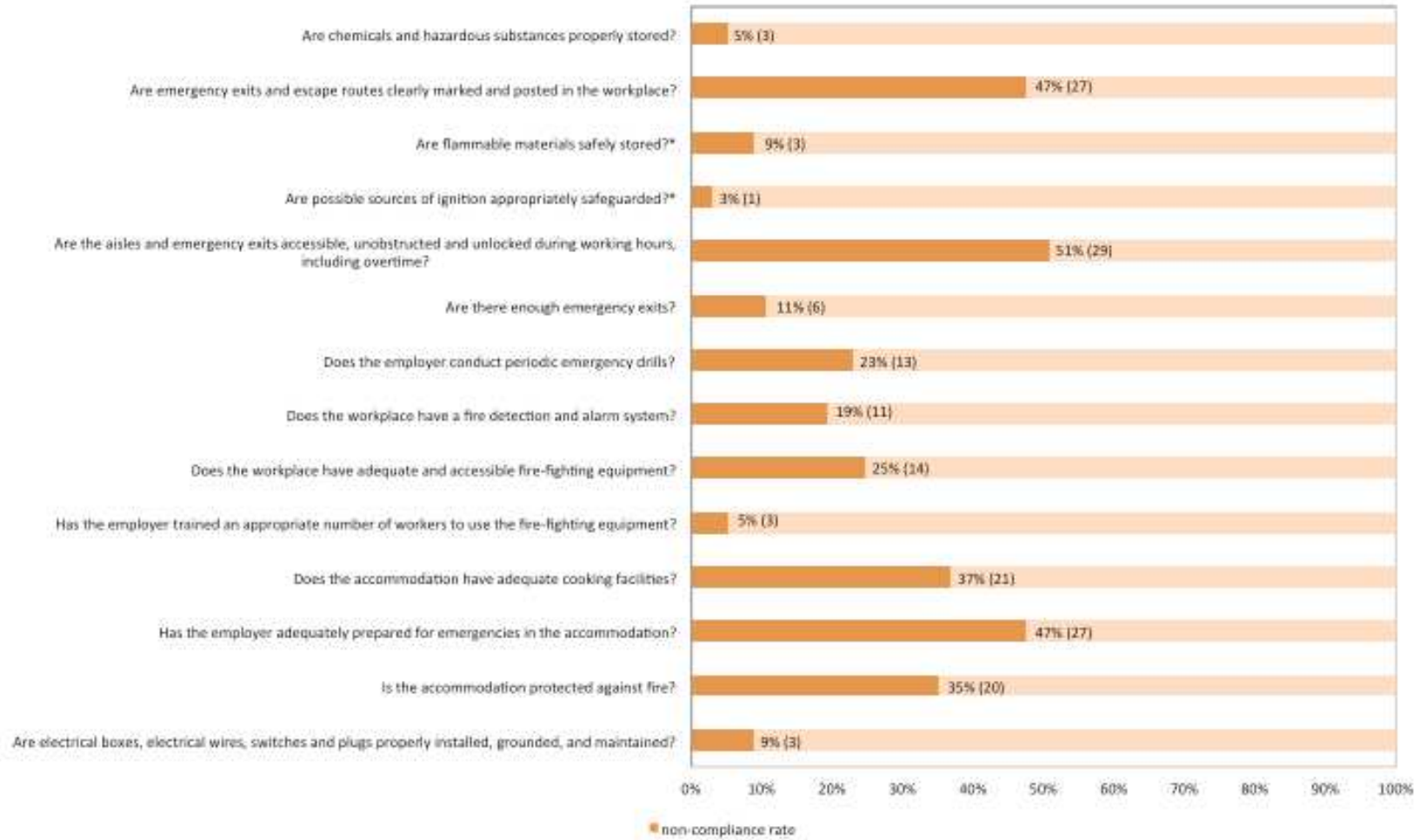
2.1 State of Fire Safety

Chart 1 provides an overview of non-compliance at the question level for the 57 assessed factories by Better Work Jordan between January 2013 and April 2014. Among these, 2 received their first assessment, 14 were assessed twice, 17 were assessed for a third time, 14 a fourth time, and 10 were assessed five times.

Main findings:

Two of the main areas of non-compliance deal with emergency exits. Fifty-one percent of the factories have inaccessible, obstructed aisles and or locked emergency exits. Forty-seven percent of factories do not have emergency exits and or escape routes clearly marked in the workplace. Almost half the employers assessed (47%) did not prepare adequately for emergencies in the accommodation, and 35% of the accommodation areas in factories were not protected against a fire.

Chart 1 : Non-compliance for fire safety



*Note: Questions denoted with * refer to 34 factories as opposed to 57 for the others because these questions were introduced to the compliance assessment tool recently*

2.2 Trends in Fire Safety Non-Compliance

This section seeks to identify changes in non-compliance related to fire safety since the establishment of Better Work Jordan. It includes 24 factories that have received four visits. Although 10 of these 24 factories were assessed five times, data from the fifth visit is not included in this analysis for the sake of consistency.

The average non-compliance across the questions related to fire safety decreases from 38% to 22% over four visits.

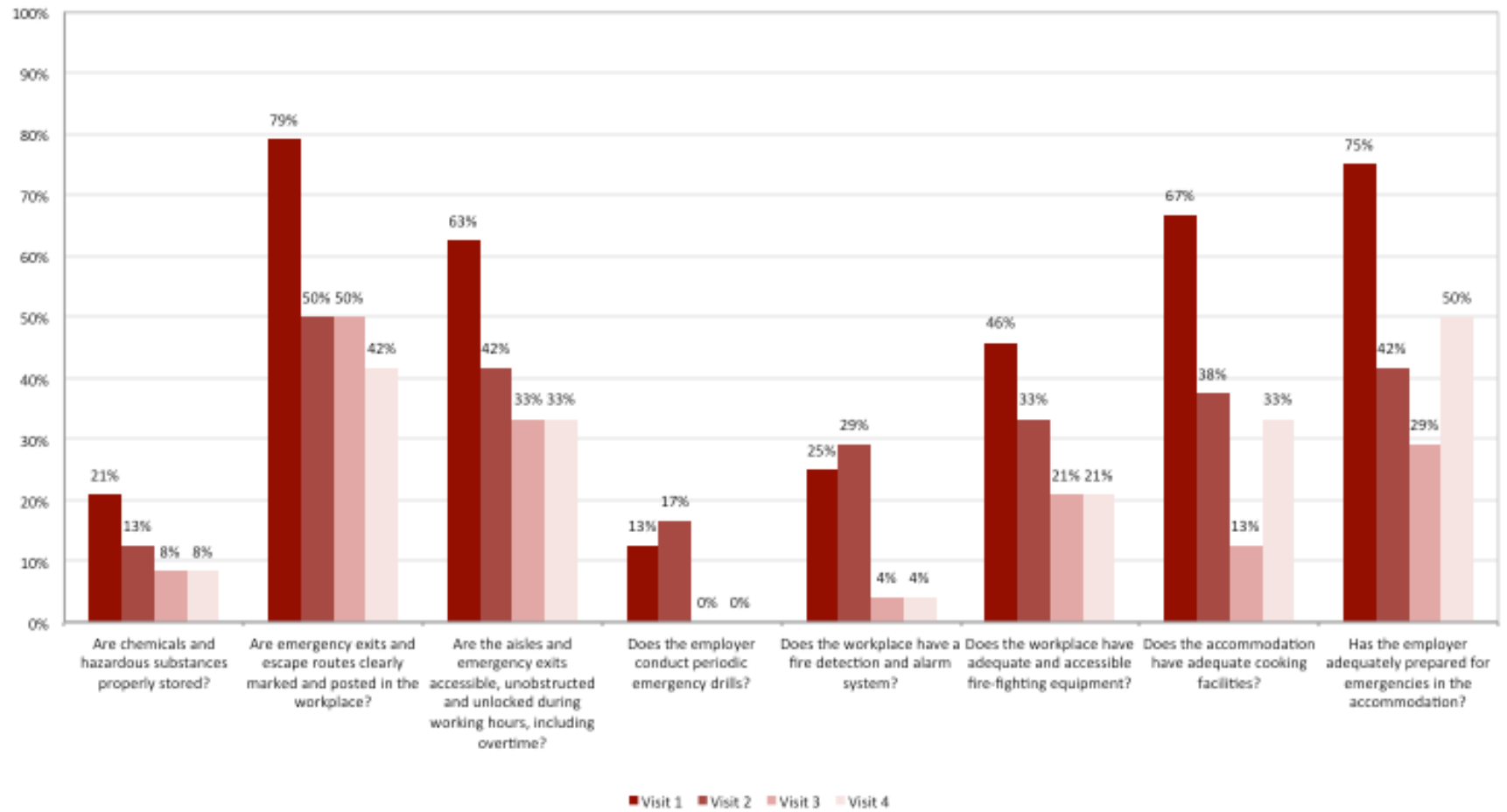
A detailed analysis of non-compliance for each question is shown in Table 2. It is a visual representation of the numbers from this table. Given that the figures show non-compliance, higher percentages indicate a greater number of issues. For the purpose of space, the chart only includes those indicators which experienced a change of 5% or more in non-compliance between the first and fourth visit.

Table 2 : Percentages and number of factories in non-compliance at the question level, by visit

	1		2		3		4	
Are chemicals and hazardous substances properly stored?	21%	(5)	13%	(3)	8%	(2)	8%	(2)
Are emergency exits and escape routes clearly marked and posted in the workplace?	79%	(19)	50%	(12)	50%	(12)	42%	(10)
Are the aisles and emergency exits accessible, unobstructed and unlocked during working hours, including overtime?	63%	(15)	42%	(10)	33%	(8)	33%	(8)
Are there enough emergency exits?	8%	(2)	13%	(3)	8%	(2)	8%	(2)
Does the employer conduct periodic emergency drills?	13%	(3)	17%	(4)	0%	(0)	0%	(0)
Does the workplace have a fire detection and alarm system?	25%	(6)	29%	(7)	4%	(1)	4%	(1)
Does the workplace have adequate and accessible fire-fighting equipment?	46%	(11)	33%	(8)	21%	(5)	21%	(5)
Has the employer informed and prepared workers for possible emergencies in the workplace?	8%	(2)	8%	(2)	4%	(1)	N/A	N/A
Has the employer trained an appropriate number of workers to use the fire-fighting equipment?	4%	(1)	0%	(0)	0%	(0)	0%	(0)
Does the accommodation have adequate cooking facilities?	67%	(16)	38%	(9)	13%	(3)	33%	(8)
Has the employer adequately prepared for emergencies in the accommodation?	75%	(18)	42%	(10)	29%	(7)	50%	(12)
Is the accommodation protected against fire?	46%	(11)	58%	(14)	58%	(14)	54%	(13)
Are electrical boxes, electrical wires, switches and plugs properly installed, grounded, and maintained?	N/A	N/A	0%	(0)	8%	(2)	4%	(1)

Note: The number of factories is indicated in parenthesis.

Chart 2: Non-compliance at question level, by visit



Non-compliance shown in Table 2 and Chart 2 shows an encouraging downward trend in non-compliance for all questions related to fire safety by the second assessment visit.

Significant improvements have been made in the area of emergency exits. The largest improvement deals with seven additional factories that leave aisles and emergency exits accessible, unobstructed and unlocked during working hours, including overtime. And nine additional factories now have emergency exits and escape routes clearly marked and posted in the workplace.

All factories who have been visited four times now conduct periodic emergency drills. Six additional factories have adequate and accessible fire-fighting equipment.

With regards to fire safety in the accommodation, improvements were made between Visits 1 and 3, but experiences an uptick in Visit 4.

Section III: Fire Safety Initiatives to Date

Better Work Jordan has undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years to strengthen fire safety in the apparel industry:

In September 2013, BWJ revised its Compliance Assessment Tool (CAT), incorporating more questions related to fire safety. At the same time, it was decided that an expired business license would be cited as a non-compliance in factory assessment reports since the business license renewal process requires building inspections by the Civil Defense Department.

BWJ initiated a stakeholder process to review a 2008 Ministry of Health regulation setting out legal standards for safety and health conditions in worker dormitories. This process culminated in an updated regulation that became effective as of August 2013. The following month, BWJ began inspection of dormitories based on the updated regulation.

BWJ has initiated discussions with various governmental agencies in order to establish a clear governmental mechanism for the inspection of all workers' dormitories in accordance with the updated Ministry of Health regulation.

BWJ developed Occupation Safety and Health training materials for workers focusing on fire safety, and delivered six training sessions for 96 workers, including 72 women workers on a variety of Occupation Safety and Health topics. Among the major topics for discussion was fire safety at the workplace and at the dormitories. For those participating in the training sessions, workers were provided with various materials related to OSH such as first aid kits, water bottles, and personal hygiene kits.

BWJ delivered three separate Occupational Safety and Health training sessions to 56 middle management from 31 factories, of which 37 were women. Factory fire safety measures were a primary topic in these trainings.

Visual educational materials on Occupational Safety and Health were developed by BWJ staff, and designed using simple illustrations by a professional cartoonist. Copies from those brochures and videos were distributed to the factories, and uploaded on to the BWJ website. Most of these materials dealt with fire safety at the workplace and in the dormitories.

An OSHA certified trainer trained all BWJ Enterprise Advisors on occupational safety and health risk in the garment industry with a particular focus on fire safety.

To commemorate World Day for Safety and Health at Work on 28 April, BWJ facilitated a meeting between national stakeholders to discuss fire risks in factories and dormitories, and how these risks can be reduced.

Potential fire risks in factories and dormitories were also discussed at the 2014 International Buyers Forum in April 2014. International buyers encouraged the national stakeholders to come with an action plan to regularly inspect dormitory conditions.

Section IV: Conclusions and Recommendations

While steady improvements can be noted in most areas of compliance related to fire safety, there is still some work to be done. Fire safety practices in most garment factories have been upgraded over the past five years. For example, most factories have installed push-bar emergency exit doors. The data identifies a few remaining concerns, particularly blockages of aisles and fire safety exits, and factory escape routes that are not clearly marked. It should be noted that these incidences of non-compliance are repeated each year. This suggests that many factories have yet to introduce a system for monitoring, maintaining and improving fire safety measures. The introduction of such systems will be a focus of BWJ advisory services over the next year.

Since the inception of the programme, Better Work Jordan is not aware of any significant incidents with regards to factory fires. Over the past five years, fire safety practices in most garment factories have seen considerable improvement due to advisory services. According to the data, there are a few remaining concerns, which are generally related to the degree of commitment from individual factories to promote fire safety. These have to do with blockages of aisles and fire safety exits and factory escape routes that are not clearly marked. Assessments reveal that these are chronic issues in that a factory that was previously compliant may be found non-compliant in a subsequent visit. Better Work Jordan's advisory services will continue to emphasise putting in place functional OSH systems, as they are both required by the labor law and are likely to reduce non-compliance rates with these issues.

Although there have not been any reports of major incidents in recent years, Better Work Jordan is aware of a number of minor incidents, which suggests that fire safety risks are higher in dormitories than they are in factories. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, dormitories are not regularly inspected by a government agency to ensure that they are safe and meet legal standards. In addition, many dormitories in Jordan were not designed and built to be dormitories and, as such, are lacking fire safety measures appropriate for the number of persons living in them. In addition, unlike factories dormitories can be multiple-storied, customarily contain flammable materials (clothes, curtains, etc.), and either lack or have inadequate common cooking facilities as a result of which workers frequently cook in their rooms using small propane stoves.

Over the next year, BWJ will place special emphasis to improve dormitories standards and fire safety measures. BWJ will facilitate a multi-stakeholder discussion during the latter half of 2014 in order to agree on a mechanism for regular enforcement of the Ministry of Health regulation governing dormitory standards. In addition, BWJ will encourage all garment factories to report to the Civil Defense Department all buildings in which their employees are living, irregardless of whether they own or lease the premises. Particular emphasis should be given to buildings being used as dormitories that were originally constructed for another purpose. Finally, BWJ will insist that administration of industrial zones keep up-to-date records of all dormitories used by factories to accommodate workers and that these records be shared with the appropriate government authorities.

Annex

Annex A: Factories Covered in this Report

Ahmad Qadri Co. & Partners
Al Areen wear L.T.D
Al Hadaf Apparel Manufacturing Co.
Al Hanan for Cloth Manufacturing Est.

AL Masera Textile
Al Tafilah Apparel Co. LTD
Al-Kawthar Garments Industry and Trade Co. Ltd.
Al-Tayaseer Factory for Apparel
Apparel Concepts L.L.C
Aseel Universal Garments Manufacturing Co.,
Atateks Foreign Trade LTD.
Atlanta Garment MNF Company
Business Faith Garment Mfg Co., Ltd
Camel Textile International Corp
Casual Wear Apparel LLC
Century Miracle
Century Wear Co.
Classic Fashion Apparel Industry (Unit 1, 2 & 4)
EAM Maliban Textiles Jordan (PVT) Ltd
EAM Maliban Textiles Jordan (PVT) Ltd. /Satellite Unit
ELZAY Ready Wear Manufacturing CO.
Fine Apparel LTD
Galaxy Apparel Industry
Haifa Apparel
Hi-Tech Textile L.L.C.
International British Garments
International Elegance Garment Mfg. Co. LTD
Ivory Garments Factory
Jerash Garments and Fashions Manufacturing Co Ltd
Jordan Star Apparel Industries CO. LTD
Jordanian Modern Textile
Kareem Industrial Textiles Co, Ltd.
M/S Rainbow Textile L.L.C.
Modern Apparel CO. LTD.
Musa Company for manufacturing ready garments
Mustafa & Kamal Ashraf Trading (Jordan) Garment Ltd.
Needle Craft Ltd. Jordan
Oasis Textiles International Co., Ltd.
Paramount Garments Ltd.
Prestige Apparel Manufacturing LTD Company
Rich Door Textile Factory
Rich Pine International Group Ltd.
Sana Garments Company
Southern Garment Manufacturing Co. LTD.
Standard Jeans Apparel Manufacturing Co.
Standard Jeans Apparel Manufacturing Co. Ltd.
(Satellite Unit)
Standard Textile Jordan
Sterling Apparel Manufacturing
Sterling Apparel Manufacturing L.L.C. (Satellite)
Straight Line For Apparel Co.
Sun Jordan Textile Co. Ltd
Third Dimension Apparel LLC
TRANS WORLD APPAREL Mfg Co.
Tusker Apparel Co.
United Creations L.L.C.
Vega Textile LTD.
Victorious Apparels Mfg. Co. Ltd.