

## FLA TOOLBOX

DESIGNED TO HELP  
FACTORIES EVALUATE  
AND IMPROVE  
COMPLIANCE  
PERFORMANCE



## Conflict Settlement and Grievance Procedure

### The need to manage conflict

#### The Challenge:

Diverging opinions can arise in factories due to the demographic variety of the workforce and the subsequent diverse points of view. While it is not possible to eliminate these differences nor the possible conflicts that might emerge, we can choose positive ways to manage them.

#### Transforming a negative into a positive:

There is the perception that conflicts are always destructive. This is due to the tendency to confuse conflict with the ways in which it is articulated – disputes, fights, screaming, aggressive discussions - which tend to be violent, or at the very least uncomfortable, for the people involved. Managing conflict means creating strategies to minimize its negative aspects and bring out the positive to increase the effectiveness of enterprises.

#### The Benefits:

Factories that take conflict resolution seriously are able to offer workers internal mechanisms to channel their concerns.

These internal mechanisms allow management to take an active role in solving compliance problems in a sustainable manner.

Conflict resolution mechanisms can help management and workers detect and communicate problems, identify root causes and propose solutions to improve relationships and working conditions in factories. FLA surveys have shown that efficient grievance procedures have a positive impact on labor-management relations, turnover rates and production efficiency in factories.



The **Fair Labor Association** (FLA) is a collaborative effort to improve working conditions in factories around the world. By working cooperatively with forward-looking companies, NGOs and universities, the FLA developed a workplace code of conduct based on ILO standards, and created a practical system of monitoring, remediation and verification to achieve these standards. For more information on the FLA, our processes, or the participants, please visit our website at <http://www.fairlabor.org>.

## 3 Steps to Building An Effective Grievance Management System

#### Step 1

Know the needs of your workplace through:

- Management Self-Assessment Tool
- Workers Survey

#### Step 2

Conduct capacity building via:

- Face-to-Face Courses
- E-courses

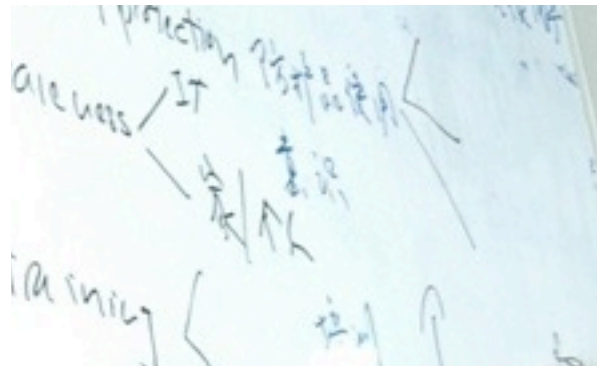
#### Step 3

Evaluate implemented changes:

- Management Self-Assessment Tool\*
- Workers Survey\*
- Progress Tracking Charts

\*Before and after - analysis

## CAPACITY BUILDING TOOLS



# TRAINING COURSE: CONFLICT SETTLEMENT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

## Approach

As all conflicts are different, and there are no universal formulas for their treatment or management. The Fair Labor Association encourages factories to put in place procedures that allow the factory to manage not only an isolated dispute, but any conflict that arises within the organization.

The Fair Labor Association believes that the most productive systems are those that provide the greatest opportunity for mutually-beneficial solutions to conflict. This set of Sustainable Compliance Instructional Materials (SCIM) encourages factories to dramatically reduce, if not eliminate, the 'resort to management' action to solve conflicts, to maintain a clear framework of rights, and to maximize dialogue and consensus building.

## Methodology

Through theoretical explanations, exercises, case studies, and analysis of actual grievance procedures, participants gain a better comprehension of the concepts and principles of conflict management and grievance procedures. They learn how such knowledge can be applied in practice within their organizations, and how it can be used to help design or revise their own procedures.

Participants are also encouraged to compare the benefits and disadvantages of different grievance procedures designs. Participants will be able to assess the effectiveness of their procedures according to the principles learned, in addition to the viability and efficiency of such procedures. The SCIMs include guidelines of good practice and training materials that users can access through the FLA Training Portal or through a live training session.

## Content

This course is divided into three parts:

**The First Part** covers general aspects of conflict management, illustrating different techniques and developing different skills to help those responsible for dispute handling identify root causes of the conflicts.

**The Second** focuses on mediation as a process to promote dialogue and consensus building.

**The Third** concentrates on ways to design a formal grievance procedure that allows management to restore workers' rights that have been breached and/or to stop abuses committed against workers.

## OUTLINE OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL:

- ✦ What is conflict?
- ✦ How to manage conflict
- ✦ From where do most conflicts arise?
  - ✦ How do positions, interests and needs affect conflict management?
  - ✦ Why focus on the conflict and not the person?
  - ✦ What are the main obstacles to conflict management?
  - ✦ Mediation
  - ✦ Grievance procedures
  - ✦ What principles should a grievance procedure insure?
  - ✦ What steps should the grievance procedure of my factory include?
  - ✦ Analysis of the grievance procedure steps:
    1. presentation of a grievance
    2. receipt of the grievance
    3. classification
    4. meeting
    5. investigation
    6. decision making
    7. right to appeal
    8. record keeping

# ONLINE TOOLKIT: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

## Objective

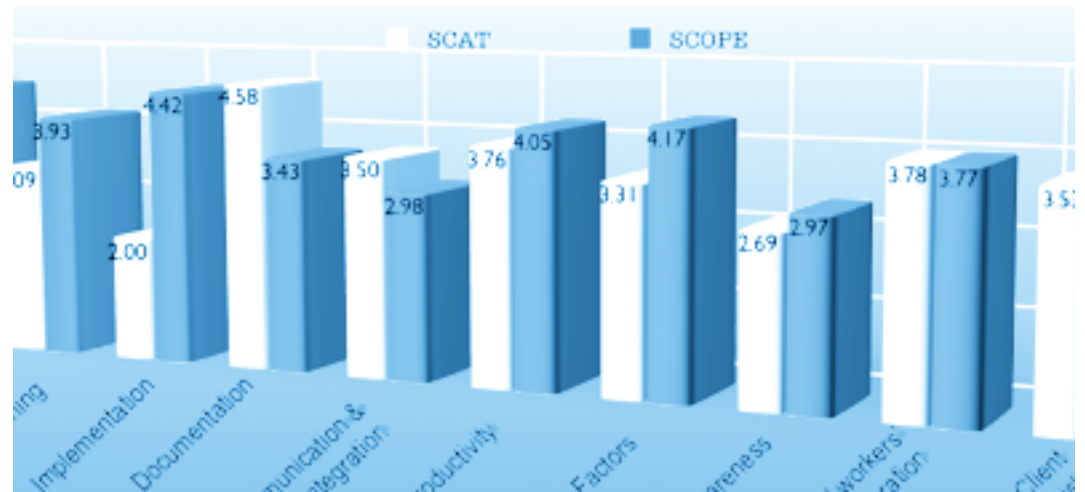
Similar to face to face training, the online toolkit shows how to design and implement grievance procedures and practices that contribute to the achievement of an organization's business objectives, both at the factory and institutional levels.

## Content

The online toolkit summarizes the definition of conflict management, obstacles to the resolution of conflict, the actors involved, the steps that grievance procedure should ensure and an analysis of all of the factors that are important when resolving conflict.

The Grievance Procedure online toolkit can be accessed by all FLA members on the training portal.

## SUSTAINABLE COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT TOOLS



### Management Self-Assessment tool

The Management Self-Assessment tool on Grievance Procedures measures a factory's performance when receiving and managing grievances and complaints. Assessing factors such as policy, procedure, training, implementation, communication, documentation, workers' integration and awareness, this tool captures all of the important elements when mapping a comprehensive picture of a factory's grievance procedures and practices. The risk of noncompliance is higher if one or more of these factors are missing or incomplete. A score below three (on a five-point scale) indicates substantive problems and a serious risk of noncompliance.

### Methodology

The Management Self-Assessment tool on Grievance Procedures is a quantitative tool consisting of a range of multiple-choice questions. The answers to the questions either support or reveal the weaknesses of a factory's compliance. The data generated by the Self-Assessment juxtaposes a factory's compliance score with the basics of the Grievance Procedures.

### Sincerity, Support, Progress

Management Self-Assessment tools are embedded in a comprehensive problem solving process. This process starts with an analysis of needs, then offers capacity building tools to address those needs, and subsequently communicates measurements of progress. Measurement of progress is only possible if the baseline is correctly and candidly identified. After an average 12 months of capacity building, the Self-Assessment is repeated to gauge the impact. The results of the Self-Assessment can be compared to those of the workers surveys to verify the integrity of the data.

### SCOPE Workers' Survey

The views of workers are essential to ensure the consistency and sustainability of compliance. The workers' survey on grievance procedure gathers information on if the workers have ever used a complaint channel or complained through other means, what was the follow-up, and have they been integrated into the decision-making process of the procedure

### Method & Organization of Interviews

SCOPE is a standardized quantitative survey. Workers complete a questionnaire comprised mainly of multiple-choice questions. All workers' interviews are anonymous, and the FLA ensures participating workers' protection.

### Sample

Workers participating in SCOPE are chosen randomly from a list of factory workers. The sample size correlates with the size of the factory's workforce. The survey instrument covers Grievance Procedures from a workers' perspective (e.g., have workers ever used a complaints channel, complained through other means, what was the follow-up, have workers been integrated into the procedure, etc.).

### Comprehensive Picture

Whenever possible, the SCOPE topics mirror the Management Self-Assessment tool (e.g., policy, procedure, training, etc.) to collect comparable data. Each of these factors is measured through 5 to 10 questions (items) that add up to a final score. The results are then directly compared to those from the Management Self-Assessment. The SCOPE survey and the Self-Assessment can be repeated after a period of time to explore a factory's progress.

### Progress Tracking Charts

Indicators measure a factory's progress during the capacity building phase. They show if what was learned during capacity building translates to implementation on the factory floor. Factories collect the necessary indicator data monthly and provide periodic reports on progress and any issues during the project.

### Measured Dimensions

- ✦ Grievance Policy & Procedure
- ✦ Grievance channels available to workers and the ease of using them
- ✦ The timeliness, professionalism, confidentiality and effectiveness of the grievance procedure process
- ✦ Consequences, follow-up and the existence of longterm solutions to common grievances
- ✦ Dispute settlement

For more information please visit the

[FLA TRAINING PORTAL](http://tp.fairlabor.org)

[tp.fairlabor.org](http://tp.fairlabor.org)

[FLA ASSESSMENT PORTAL](http://ap.fairlabor.org)

[ap.fairlabor.org](http://ap.fairlabor.org)

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