

Chapter Eleven: Risk Mapping and the Use of the Checklist

11.1. Introduction

There are two tools that can help you to assess any health and safety hazards in your workplace – these are **risk maps** and **checklists**. We have already looked at various health and safety problems in the garment industry and it is now important to concentrate on your own factory:

- How safe is it?
- What are the major health and safety problems?
- What are the priorities?
- How can the hazards be controlled?
- What are the cost implications?
- What does the law require?
- How can the workers be involved?
- How can a health and safety policy be developed and implemented for the benefit of management and workers?

As a start, you have to look closely at your own factory and build up a picture of workplace hazards and risks. You can develop risk maps for each section/floor of your factory that are put on file for future reference – any changes (such as new machine guards on the machines or the use of safer chemicals in the spot cleaning area) must be recorded. **In other words you are building up a diagrammatic overview of the state of OSH in your factory.**

11.2. Risk Mapping

The objectives of risk mapping are:

- To list the main occupational risk factors;
- To create a diagram/s of potential hazards in the garment factory; and
- To help to prioritise workplace hazards so that measures can be implemented to control them.

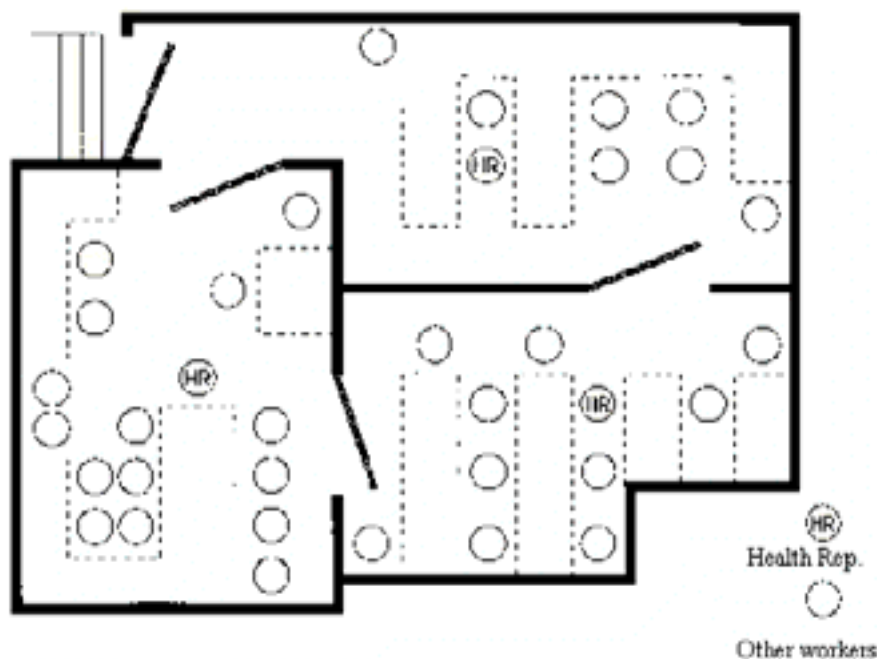
The information shown on a risk map includes:

- the type of process;
- the location of machinery, equipment, storage areas, exits, fire fighting equipment, first-aid boxes, infirmary, rest rooms etc;
- potential hazards (chemical, physical etc⁸).

The process is quite simple – all you have to do is draw a floor plan of the factory or the component sections/floors, marking as accurately as possible, the main features of the factory – doors, windows, stairs, gangways etc. Once you have your floor plan mark all potential hazards/risks – build up a picture of the state of health and safety in your factory. You can also put down the normal location of key personnel such as first-aiders, members of your fire-fighting team, or health and safety representatives (HR) if you have a joint OSH committee (see Figure 22).

⁸ For these potential hazards you can use a colour coding system e.g. red for chemicals, green for physical hazards, blue for ergonomic problems etc. or you can use your own short hand symbols.

Figure 22: The framework of a risk map. You can now use a colour code or your own symbol to identify potential hazards.



11.3. Checklists

You are not expected to become a health and safety expert overnight – you may be the general manager or a workers’ representative and have limited time to think about health and safety in your factory. The usual approach is for someone to do a quick, occasional “walk through” inspection and then report back. This is not the way to approach the question of health and safety in your garment factory – by undertaking this ad-hoc, haphazard approach, you will miss things that could be vital. You need to look carefully, in a planned, logical way, at each part of the production process and at each workers job. This may be time consuming at the beginning but will pay dividends in the end. The task becomes a great deal easier if you have the full co-operation of the workforce and there is a viable joint worker/management health and safety committee at the factory. The task is also made easier by the use of checklists that help you not to miss anything. In each section of the manual there is a specific checklist to cover that topic and a full checklist is available in Khmer in Appendix 3.