

**BESTSELLER**  
**ILLEGAL WORKER POLICY**  
**BESTSELLER SUSTAINABILITY**



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**BESTSELLER®**

# **BESTSELLER'S ILLEGAL WORKER POLICY**

## **BACKGROUND**

Illegal workers are defined as people working without the required permission to work. Typically, illegal workers are foreign workers that do not have a valid work permit in the country where they stay. The responsibility for ensuring employees have the required permission to work, lies with the employer. Without permission to work, illegal workers are not secured by legally binding labour contracts and fundamental labour rights. They are vulnerable and may suffer exploitation and poor working conditions.

## **SPECIFICALLY FOR TURKEY**

Due to the crisis in Syria, Turkey has received more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees since 2011, making Turkey the world's largest refugee-hosting country. The situation entails a high risk of refugees being exploited as a cheap source of illegal labour, including in the garment industry. Since 2011, the Turkish government has therefore introduced a series of laws, allowing refugees to apply for a temporary work permit, thereby seeking to accommodate an urgent need for securing labour rights of Syrian refugees. Despite this, Syrian refugees remain vulnerable to exploitation in the Turkish garment industry.

## **OUR POSITION**

BESTSELLER's Code of Conduct states that:

- Suppliers must not use any illegal workers, or any kind of forced or prison labour.
- All employees must have a signed legally binding labour contract in a language that is understandable to the employee.

BESTSELLER will not work with suppliers, who employ workers without a work permit, or suppliers that do not have efficient management systems in place to ensure that work permit verification procedures are followed and implemented effectively. Only persons with a valid work permit may be present at the workplace.

Suppliers may not in any way benefit from exploitation of illegal workers. Hence, they must also ensure that no sub-suppliers or subcontractors are involved in the employment of illegal workers.

## **GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ILLEGAL WORKERS (EXCLUDING TURKEY)**

If illegal workers are found in a factory, the following actions will be taken:

- The employee must be dismissed, and the supplier must provide the employee with a notice that is in accordance with national regulation.
- In addition to the notice period, the factory must pay three months' salary to the employee. The salary paid must not be less than the statutory minimum wage.

Suppliers are expected to work in close collaboration with BESTSELLER representatives and any collaboration partner to BESTSELLER to ensure that the situation is handled with the utmost focus on not causing any additional harm to the employee. The supplier should agree to and carry out all agreements made. In case illegal workers are found, BESTSELLER reserves the right to cancel orders and terminate the business relationship. The cooperation with the supplier will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING REFUGEE WORKERS IN TURKEY**

BESTSELLER acknowledges that the situation in Turkey is extraordinary. It is the responsibility of us and our suppliers to protect refugees and ensure they are employed under decent conditions. Therefore, instead of adopting a zero-tolerance policy towards employment of illegal workers in Turkey, we will handle the situation case by case, with the utmost attention to the personal situation of the employee.

If illegal workers are found in a Turkish factory, the following actions will be taken:

- Our local office – and, if relevant, our headquarters – will closely assess the situation onsite at the factory.
- Each incident will be handled case by case through close dialogue between our HQ, our local office and the supplier, with the focus of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the employee.
- To prevent dismissal of illegal workers resulting in even worse living conditions, BESTSELLER will require the supplier to help the employee apply for a working permit, so the employee can keep his/her job with assured labour rights and decent working conditions.
- If required, we will involve relevant NGOs in the remediation process.

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