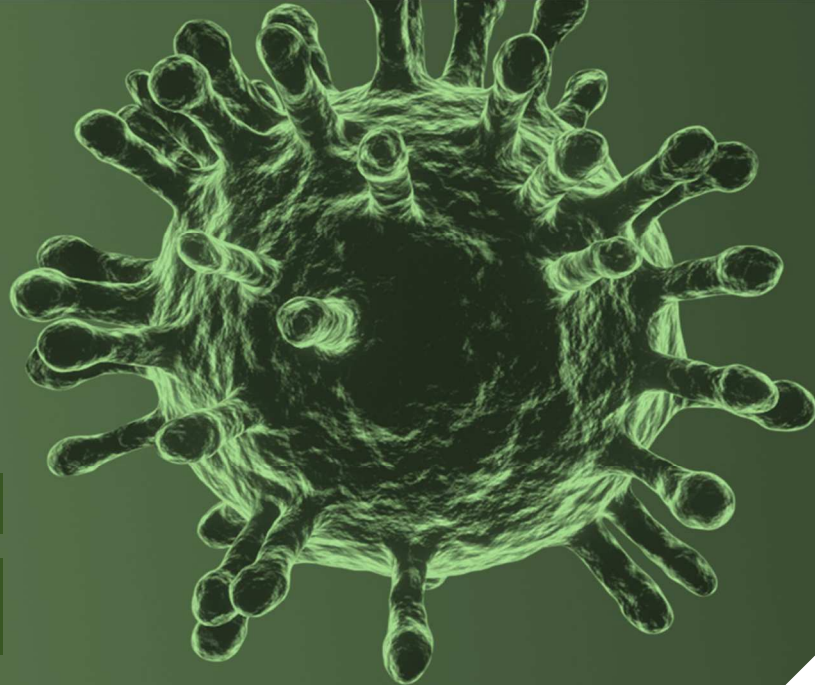




Building resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic



COVID-19 guide & action checklist



For medium-sized factories & managers

Organizing the factory for safer and more efficient operations

This guide aims to assist factory owners and managers re-organize their factories in order to provide better safety measures and improve their operational efficiency during and after the COVID-19 outbreak.

Getting started



Includes:
Action plan,
checklist and
template

In this guide:

- ▶ Why your factory layout matters during the pandemic
- ▶ A safer and more efficient factory operation
- ▶ What is a well-organized layout?
- ▶ Key steps to organizing the factory



1. Why your factory layout matters during the pandemic

In COVID-19 times, it is especially important for your factory to stay tidy and clean in order to ensure proper safety protocols when it comes to hygiene and protecting your workers. In a disorganized factory, cleaning and disinfecting areas is more challenging, increasing the risk of the virus transmitting in your factory.

Organize your factory operations for better efficiency and safety



A well-thought-out layout can also reduce the need for close proximity among your employees while supporting the flow of materials in a logical fashion. As you look at re-opening or continuing operations during this time of COVID-19, maintaining proper social distancing will depend on optimizing the use of your space. Organizing your factory could also increase efficiency and reduce costs, which will be vital to ensure resilience during and after the outbreak, as well as increase factories competitiveness in the long term.



2. A safer and more efficient factory operation

Organizing your factory efficiently will help you make your production operations more efficient, gain time, and protect your workers' health and safety. It will also help reduce unnecessary costs by avoiding damage or waste of materials.

You might have excess time available that could be used to implement improvements in your factory that haven't been possible to implement in the past due to busy production schedules. Improving your organization now will not only help you to protect your workers but also to become more efficient and therefore save costs in this time of crisis, which will increase your competitiveness in the future.



3. What is a well-organized factory?

A well-organized factory includes the following characteristics:



1. Keeping the
factory tidy



2. Good
factory layout



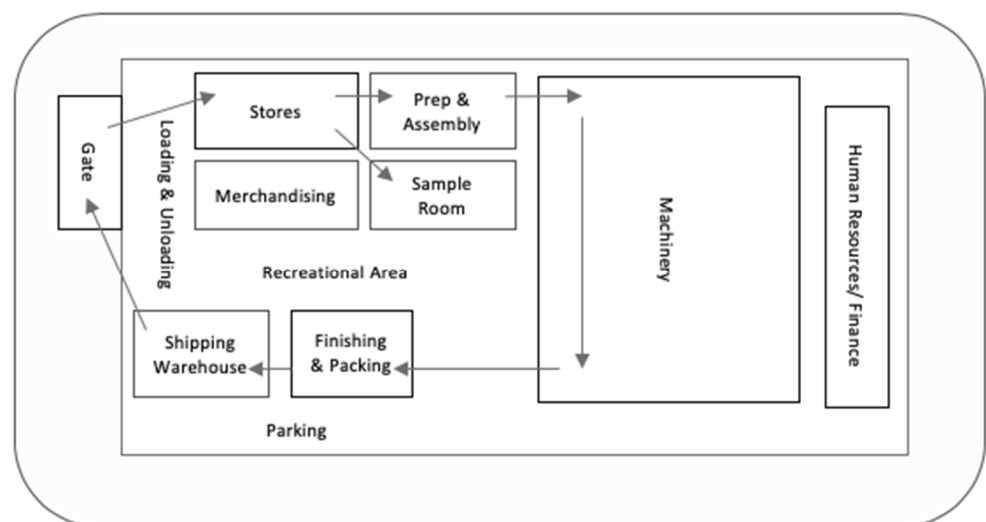
3. Regular communication
& involvement of staff



A **practice of keeping the factory tidy** and orderly is important to avoid damage to or waste of materials or products, and to protect your workers' health and safety. In tidy factories, staff store their personal belongings in lockers, all materials and tools are placed in designated rooms and areas (instead of between rooms or on the floor). Each room's purpose is designated with a sign and workers are guided from one room to the next with paths on the floor. To keep the factory tidy, bins are provided in each room and by each desk, unnecessary and unused items are discarded, and inspections regularly take place.

Moreover, a **good factory layout** will make your production process more efficient, safer, and faster and will help you gain time. In factories with a good layout, all rooms follow one continuous direction that corresponds to the production flow (from start to end). The production direction is indicated on the floor with colour markings so that staff can easily navigate the layout.

An example of a logical factory layout:



Finally, **regularly informing and involving your staff when making any changes** ensures that they understand and can maintain the organization system so that the factory remains organized in the long term. As frequent users of the space, they may also have suggestions of more efficient ways to arrange the factory floor. In well-organized factories staff follow the layout, put away tools and material to where they belong and know how they can help keep the factory clean.



4. Getting ready for action

Now that we've reviewed the importance of a good factory layout and maintenance process, the following steps and resources can help you re-organize your factory layout for better safety and production flow.



Building resilience during and after the COVID-19 pandemic



5 ways factories can organize their operations for a safer and more efficient set-up

01

Prepare the factory for operation during COVID-19

Implement social distancing measures and pandemic guidelines,

02

Tidy up your factory

Provide a safe work environment and avoid damage and waste.

03

Create routines to stay tidy and clean

Put systems in place to keep things organized .

04

Improve your factory layout

Use excess time to change the overall layout of your factory.

05

Inform and involve your workers

Keep your staff updated and engaged as things change.





Putting the measures in action: Factory checklist

1. Prepare your factory for operations during COVID-19

To be able to fulfil the requirements of social distancing in your factory and to keep everyone safe during the pandemic, you need to implement several measures before your factory can resume operations.

For a comprehensive overview of actions to take in your factory during the COVID-19 outbreak to enable social distancing and a safe work place, it is strongly recommended that you seek advice from the ["COVID-19 Management Guidance"](#) developed by the ILO's Better Work programme. While the guide is tailored to garment factories, it contains valuable information that is relevant to any factory. The below actions are a sample of recommended actions in this guide.

Action	Ease of implementation	Timeline	Check ✓
Clean your factory and complete disinfection prior to workers' return to the factory.	✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Set up hand washing stations at the gate so that all visitors and employees wash their hands before entering your factory. ▶ Ensure at least two meters distance from one tap to another. ▶ Hand washing stations should have clean dry cloths, single-use towels or hand driers – do not use reusable towels. ▶ Consider installing foot rather than hand operated taps.	✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Adjust the layout of machines and work stations so that operators are at least 2 meters (6 feet) from other people.	✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Modify the dining area to accommodate social distancing between tables or place barriers between tables.	✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Increase ventilation in the work environment by installing more pedestal or ceiling fans and/or opening the windows.	✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Install air purifiers, especially in areas which are closed and/ or air-conditioned.	✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐

2. Tidy up your factory

You need to keep your factory tidy not only to provide a safe work environment for everyone but also to avoid damage and waste. Use the excess time you may have available during this crisis to clean up your factory. The following actions will help you immediately improve the tidiness of your factory.

Action	Ease of implementation	Timeline	Check ✓
Clean all floors, tables, equipment, shelves and tools.	✓✓✓	»»»»» Short-term	☐

Discard the waste in your factory.	✓✓✓	Short-term	☐
Clear up all spaces outside or in between production rooms so that they allow for easy transportation and circulation.	✓✓✓	Short-term	☐
Return all excess materials to dedicated storage areas. Try to consider how you can get rid of any excess materials, as it may cost you money to store them in the factory over time (for more information, check out the Reducing Costs guide).	✓✓✓	Short-term	☐
Organize paper documents on shelves and in filing cabinets to avoid damage.	✓✓✓	Short-term	☐
Place waste bins in each room, by each desk or at the end of each table and by each machine for workers to throw waste.	✓✓✓	Short-term	☐
Create locker rooms where your staff can keep their personal belongings in lockers.	✓✓✓	Short-term	☐
Remove machinery that is not in use nor will be in the future.	✓✓✓	Short-term	☐

3. Create routines to enable your factory to stay tidy and clean

Cleaning and tidying up are important. So are creating routines and putting systems in place that enable your factory to stay tidy, clean and organized in the long term. Make sure that you assign any new tasks created as part of your cleaning procedure to some of your staff and make it part of their responsibility to perform tasks regularly according to the plan.

Useful tip: You can use the template in Appendix A to decide on your own cleaning schedule.

Action	Ease of implementation	Timeline	Check ✓
Create properly labelled storage areas for items such as samples, parts, defective items or waste.	✓✓	Short-term	☐
Set up a system to ensure floors, tables, equipment, shelves and tools are cleaned on a specified regular basis.	✓✓	Mid-term	☐
Set up a system to ensure washrooms and other facilities are cleaned regularly as specified.	✓✓	Mid-term	☐
Set up a system to ensure waste bins are emptied and waste is discarded as regularly as needed.	✓✓	Mid-term	☐
Set up a system to ensure that you periodically check for pests and insects in the factory.	✓✓	Mid-term	☐

Set up a maintenance schedule to check your machines and equipment on a recommended basis in order to minimize breakdowns.	✓✓	»»»» Mid-term	☐
4. Improve your factory layout You could also use this time to evaluate the overall layout of your factory. Maybe you already have some ideas of how restructuring could enable work to proceed more efficiently, but you have not had a chance to make these changes before. A logical, simple, safe and well-indicated factory layout helps reduce material transportation time and walking time and avoids damage, accidents and unnecessary movement of human traffic and contact. Whilst it might be challenging to create an ideal factory layout, you can come up with a layout (keeping in mind new health and safety practices due to the COVID-19 pandemic) that helps you to re-organise and optimize your factory space within the floor space that is available in the short term.			
Action	Ease of implementation	Timeline	Check ✓
Draw an overview of your factory layout if you do not have one already. Useful tip: You can use the template in Appendix C to draw your layout.	✓✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Assess whether your layout fulfils the following criteria: ▶ Rooms follow one single continuous direction ▶ Directions follow the production flow ▶ Layout is easy for staff to understand and navigate ▶ Layout is safe for staff, with proper distances maintained between workers ▶ Layout minimizes material transportation and walking time ▶ Space is used as efficiently as possible Layout adheres to the social distancing and hygiene requirements for operating during the COVID-19 pandemic (consider reviewing the “COVID-19 Management Guidance” by ILO’s Better Work programme for suggestions).	✓✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Based on the criteria above, consider how you could improve your layout. Write down the changes that you would like to make and draw an overview of your new layout. Useful tip: You can use the template in Appendix C to draw your layout.	✓✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Implement the changes to your factory layout. Ensure that you keep track of all the changes that you are making so that you easily can inform your staff about the new layout once they return to the factory. Useful tip: You can display your new layout on the Notice Board(s).	✓✓✓	»»» Short-term	☐
Consult and involve your key staff representative(s) when making the changes to your factory layout. Inform them about how to follow the new organization system (see recommendation 5 below). Useful tip: You can use the Workers Council or any other representative team.	✓✓	»»»» Mid-term	☐

Evaluate your factory layout on a regular basis and re-adjust as needed. Useful tip: Ask for suggestions and ideas and have a separate employee suggestions box for this or use a WhatsApp group or similar app.		 Long-term	
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5. Inform and involve your workers

To make sure that everyone complies with the new social distancing and hygiene measures, as well as to keep the factory tidy, clean and organized, it is important that you inform and involve your staff in the process. This is also important to ensure that workers feel safe at the workplace.

Action	Ease of implementation	Timeline	Check ✓
Organize a training for all your employees (limited people at a time) once you resume operations in the factory to create awareness about the measures that are in place in the factory to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Useful tip: Use the concepts of a Townhall meeting or Team briefing (maintain social distancing).	✓✓	»» Short-term	☐
When resuming operations, brief your staff regularly about measures you have already implemented or plan to implement to prevent the risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus.	✓✓	»» Short-term	☐
Use different channels of communication to inform your workers about measures taken in the factory, such as notice boards, posters, meetings, leaflets and audio messages and / or popularly used apps (which may be faster and more economical).	✓✓	»» Short-term	☐
Assign tasks to staff members to ensure that new measures taken keep the factory clean, tidy and organized are performed in a timely manner in both the short- and long-term.	✓✓	»»»» Mid-term	☐
Whenever new workers join your factory, train them on the COVID-19 measures before they start work, the organization in the factory and how they can contribute towards keeping the factory and their workplace clean, organized and safe.	✓✓	»»»» Mid-term	☐
Useful tip: To plan and implement all these actions, you can use the template in Appendix B.			

Appendix A: Establishing routines for a tidy and clean factory

Cleaning the factory – Action Plan			
Factory area(s)	Action(s) to be taken	Person responsible	Frequency

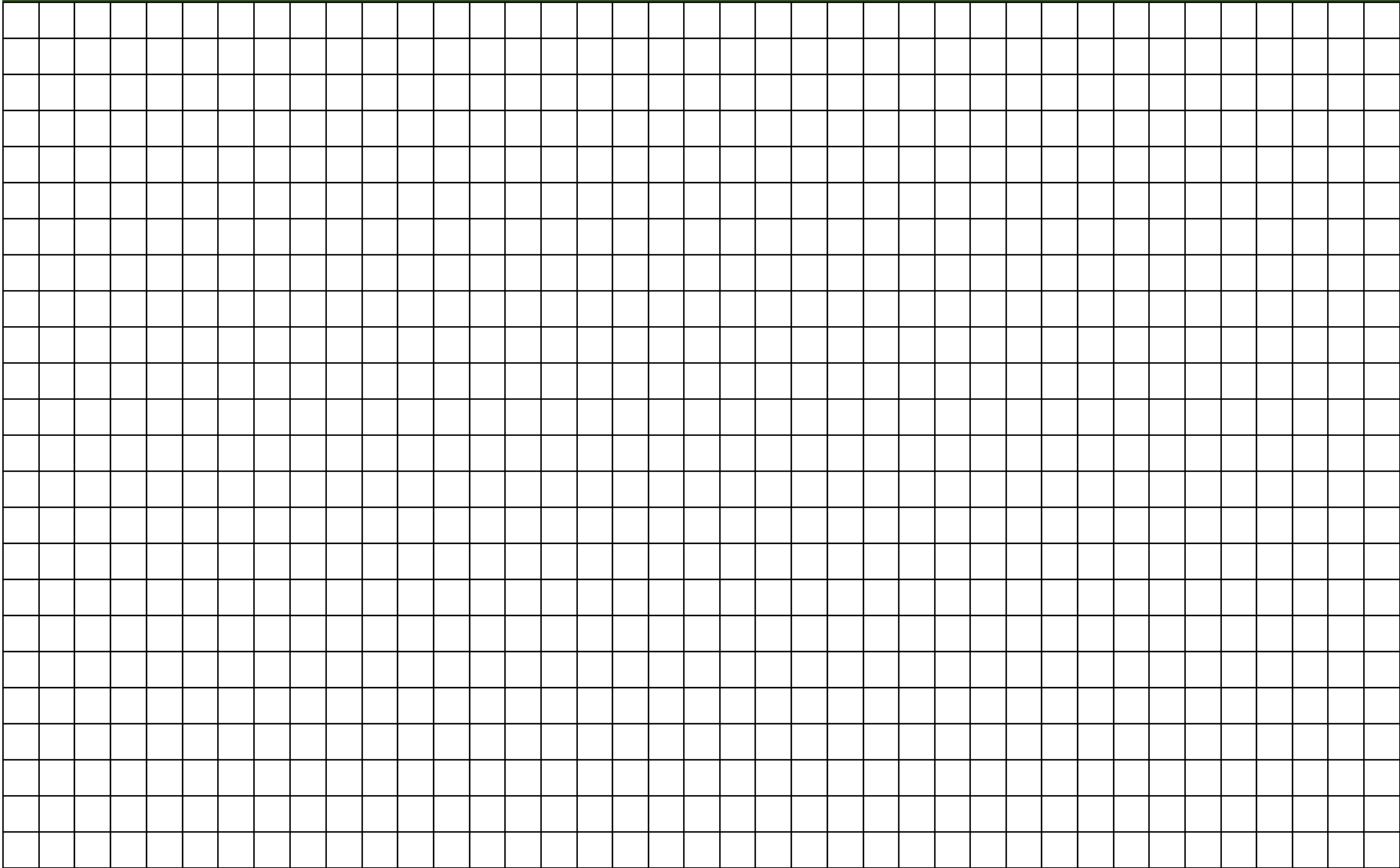
Appendix B: Action Plan Template

Action Plan				
Problem identified	Action(s) to be taken	Person responsible	By when?	How will improvements be measured?

Appendix C: Templates to draw your existing and new factory layout

[illegible]

Template to draw your new factory layout





This guide was developed by the ILO Enterprises department for the **Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia** project, funded by the Government of Sweden.

For more guides and resources to help you navigate the global COVID-19 pandemic, visit:

▶ ilo.org/covid19

**Decent Work Technical Support Team for East
and South-East Asia and the Pacific**

United Nations Building, 10th Floor

Rajdamnern Nok Avenue,

Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel.: 662 288 1234 Fax. 662 288 3058

Email: BANGKOK@ilo.org

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