



Ethical
Trading
Initiative



RESOURCE PACK

Improving occupational health & safety and meeting decent work standards



Introduction

The **purpose** of this resource pack is to help SMEP grantees strengthen their organisational practice around decent work and occupational health and safety (OHS).

It complements three online workshops hosted in September and October 2025.

The pack introduces the concept of decent work through the five components of the [International Labour Organisation's \(ILO\) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#):

- Elimination of forced or compulsory labour
- Abolition of child labour
- Elimination of discrimination
- Freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Safe and healthy working environments

For each of these areas, the pack provides a **short explanation** and points the reader to more detailed **guidance** and **support organisations**.

It is designed to be used alongside the workshop slides.

The resource pack and workshops have been developed by the [Ethical Trading Initiative](#) (ETI). The following page contains a brief introduction to ETI.





**Ethical
Trading
Initiative**

**ETI is a leading alliance of
trade unions, NGOs and
companies, working
together to advance
human rights in global
supply chains**

www.ethicaltrade.org

Who we are

NGOs

NGOs bring global presence, specialist insights, tools and resources to ETI's membership.

Businesses

Our company members' supply chains reach 160 million workers, span many sectors, includes retailers, brands, suppliers and manufacturers.

Trade unions

160m workers represented globally, in all countries where free trade unions can operate



Vision

Our **vision** is a world that protects human rights, ensures dignity for all, provides opportunity and is free of exploitation and abuse.

Mission

Our **mission** is to advocate for the most vulnerable workers, by harnessing the power of a diverse and growing membership.

Through collaboration and innovation, we work to drive engagement, challenge barriers to change and ensure respect for human rights at work.

History

Pioneering brands, NGOs and trade unions established ETI in 1998 to promote fundamental human rights in global supply chains.

Based on the ILO Core Conventions, the ETI Base Code was developed, turning international labour standards into a practical framework for business.



**Ethical
Trading
Initiative**

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Decent work



Decent work

Decent work is at the heart of the [UN's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#). It is central to [Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth](#).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) [explains decent work](#) as:

“Opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for all, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.”

Four pillars of decent work

The decent work agenda is built on four pillars: **employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue**.

- **Employment creation** means ensuring that people have access to jobs and livelihoods.
- **Social protection** (sometimes called *social security*) is support for workers when their ability to work is reduced. Examples include pensions, maternity pay, sickness benefits, disability benefits, or support after workplace injuries.
- **Social dialogue** refers to the ways workers and employers share information, consult, negotiate, and make decisions together. In some cases, it also includes government representatives.
- **Rights at work** centre on the [ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#), which are explained on the following page.

For a quick introduction to decent work from the ILO, watch this short film:

[What is Decent Work?](#)



Decent work

Fundamental principles and rights at work

The [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) has set out five **fundamental** principles and rights at work. These are enshrined in ILO Conventions and Recommendations and are recognised by all 187 ILO member states:

- **Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining** – workers can join groups or unions and negotiate with employers.
- **Elimination of forced or compulsory labour** – no one should be made to work against their will.
- **Abolition of child labour** – children should not be exploited for work that harms their health, safety, or education.
- **Elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation** – everyone should have equal opportunities and treatment at work.
- **Safe and healthy working environment** – workplaces must protect people's health and safety.

These principles are called “fundamental” because every ILO member state has a duty to respect, promote, and act on them – even if they have not formally ratified the related conventions.

They form the foundation of almost all international labour standards, including the [Ethical Trading Initiative \(ETI\) Base Code](#) which is used in supply chains globally. They provide the foundation for responsible business practice. This resource pack is organised around these five categories.

Forced labour



Forced labour, modern slavery

No one should be made to work under conditions of slavery or forced labour. This basic right is protected in international law, regional instruments and national laws. Yet for millions of people, the freedom to choose their work is still denied.

ILO [estimated in 2022](#) that **28 million** women, men and children are in some form of forced labour.

While the highest numbers are reported in Asia, Africa has the highest proportion of its workforce affected. However, forced labour is found in **all regions of the world**.

Modern slavery is an umbrella term that includes forced labour, and other related issues, including human trafficking, the worst forms of child labour and forced marriage, which are explained on the following page.



Forced labour, modern slavery

Key terms and definitions

Several related and at times overlapping terms are used when discussing this topic. These include:

Forced labour - Any work or services people do not choose voluntarily, and which is demanded under a threat of punishment, including the loss of rights or privileges.

Modern slavery - An umbrella term that includes forced and compulsory labour, human trafficking, debt bondage, slavery, servitude, the worst forms of child labour, and forced marriage.

Bonded labour (debt bondage) - Work demanded to repay a debt or loan. It can apply to whole families and even pass down through generations. People are often prevented from leaving and finding other work.

Human trafficking - Recruiting, transporting, transferring, receiving or holding people through force, fraud, coercion or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit.

Worst forms of child labour - Children working in armed conflict (e.g. child soldiers), prostitution and pornography, the illegal drug trade, or hazardous jobs that harm their health, safety or morals (e.g. exposures to dangerous machinery, tools, or to hazardous substances). It also includes child trafficking and forced labour, including debt bondage.

Forced labour, modern slavery

Resources

Introductory films

- [ILO: Forced Labour \(1 min\)](#) - A quick explainer of the issue.
- [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association: Modern Slavery in Supply Chains \(4 min\)](#) - Produced for UK policy makers but contains helpful information for all.
- [IOSH magazine: Modern slavery – No excuses for employers \(4 min\)](#) - Aimed at businesses.

Guidance and reading

- [Walk Free: One-page introduction](#) - Short document with initial guidance on high-risk sectors, geographies and red flags.
- [Walk Free: Global overview](#) - Comprehensive resource with country data, high-risk sectors, and government responses.
- [ILO webpages](#) - Definitions, key statistics, and links to relevant labour standards.
- [ETI and Anti-Slavery International guidance](#) - Practical advice for businesses on due diligence and tackling forced labour and modern slavery in supply chains.



Relevant ILO Conventions

[C29 – Forced Labour Convention, 1930](#)

[C105 – Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957](#)

[R203 – Forced Labour Recommendation, 2014](#)

[C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999](#)

Forced labour, modern slavery

Support organisations

- **Anti-Slavery International**

The world's oldest organisation fighting slavery. Expertise across different forms of forced labour. Works globally with partners and businesses.

<https://www.antislavery.org/>

- **Hope for Justice**

Focused on modern slavery and human trafficking. Active in the UK, USA, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Runs [Slave-Free Alliance](#), which helps businesses reduce modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains.

<https://hopeforjustice.org/>

- **Walk Free Foundation**

Known for high-quality research and guidance for business and investors. Publishes the annual **Global Slavery Index**, a key source of data and analysis.

<https://www.walkfree.org/>



Child labour



Child labour

Children have a right to be protected from harm and to access education. They should attend school before starting working.

International standards set **minimum ages for employment** to ensure children are not exploited:

- **ILO Convention 138** sets this minimum age at **15 years**.
- Some countries, set the minimum age higher (16+) or lower, depending on development standards.

Limited and supervised work for children is allowed in specific cases:

- Some national laws permit “light work” for children aged 13–15.
- This work must not harm their health or development and must not interfere with school or vocational training.

Worst forms of child labour are strictly prohibited under **ILO Convention 182**:

- Work that is **hazardous, done at night, or involves long hours**
- Work that **harms health, safety, or morals**
- Includes child trafficking, forced labour, and other extreme forms of exploitation

Both **Conventions 138 and 182** are core labour standards and are binding for all ILO member countries.



Relevant ILO Conventions

[C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973](#)

[C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999](#)

Short, accessible explainers: [C138](#) and [C182](#)

Child labour

How common is child labour?

- There are **138 million children** in child labour globally, **54 million of whom are in hazardous work**.
- Overall, child labour has **declined by 100 million since 2000**. However, in **Sub-Saharan Africa**, the number of children in child labour is rising: currently **87 million children** in the region are affected.
- **Gender differences:** Slightly more boys than girls are in paid work, and this gap widens with age. However, when **unpaid household chores (21+ hours per week)** are included, more girls than boys are engaged in child labour across age groups.
- **Impact on education:** Child labour drastically increases the likelihood of school non-attendance.
 - Among 5–14 year olds: **31%** of children in child labour **do not attend school**, compared to **8%** of children not working.
 - Among 15–17 year olds: **59%** of child labourers **do not attend school**, compared to **14%** of non-working peers.
- **Sectors:** Child labour is most common in **agriculture**, accounting for **61% of working children aged 5–17**.
 - Older children are more likely to work in **industry** or **services**. For example, among 15–17 year olds: 41% work in agriculture, 26% in industry, and 22% in services.

Statistics from the ILO-UNICEF report: [Child Labour: Global Estimates 2024](#)

Child labour

Resources

- **Useful webpages from the ILO** - Includes definitions, key statistics, links to relevant labour standards and e-learning modules.
- **UN Global Compact: The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact Principle Five** - Overview and recommendations for business
- **Save the Children: Save the Children's Position on Child Labour** - Includes a summary of the current context of child labour globally, a table detailing minimum ages for work in different countries, explanations of relevant international standards.
- **ETI: Base Code Guidance: Child Labour** - Recommendations on how to undertake due diligence in supply chains.
- **The Centre for Child Rights and Business (CCRB): Due Diligence Principles for Child Labour Remediation** - A practical framework for companies in all sectors seeking to enhance their approach to child labour remediation.
- **CCRB: Beyond Pledges on Child Labour: It's Not Just Human Rights, It's Your Business Too** - An analysis examining progress on eradicating child labour and persistent barriers faced by businesses.
- **Traidcraft and Homeworkers Worldwide: Preventing Child Labour – A Practical Toolkit for Businesses** - Whilst focused specifically on child labour risks amongst homeworkers, many of the recommendations and information are relevant to all.



Child labour

Support organisations

- **Centre for Child Rights and Business**

Works with businesses around the world to support children, young workers and parent workers in their supply chains. Teams based in Africa, Asia, Europe and the US, with experience across agriculture and manufacturing.

<https://www.childrights-business.org/>

- **Save the Children**

Global NGO with a presence in over 100 countries, including across Africa and Asia. Publishes high quality research and guidance on children's rights.

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/>

THE CENTRE
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS



Save the Children

Eliminating discrimination



Eliminating discrimination

Discrimination happens when someone is treated unfairly or differently because of personal characteristics – for example, **gender, race, religion, age, disability, or appearance** – rather than due to skills or actions.

How it appears in the workplace:

- Biased hiring, promotion, or pay practices
- Limited access to training or development opportunities
- Workplace cultures that tolerate harassment or violence

Discrimination can be:

- **Direct and intentional**, e.g. requiring women to take a pregnancy test before employment.
- **Indirect**, built into policies or practices that seem neutral but disadvantage certain groups.

Who is most at risk?

People with **intersecting identities** often face higher risks, such as migrant women or people from ethnic minority groups with disabilities.

Why it matters

Discrimination harms individuals' **dignity, physical and mental health**, and also **reduces team morale, trust, and overall organisational performance**.

How workplaces can respond

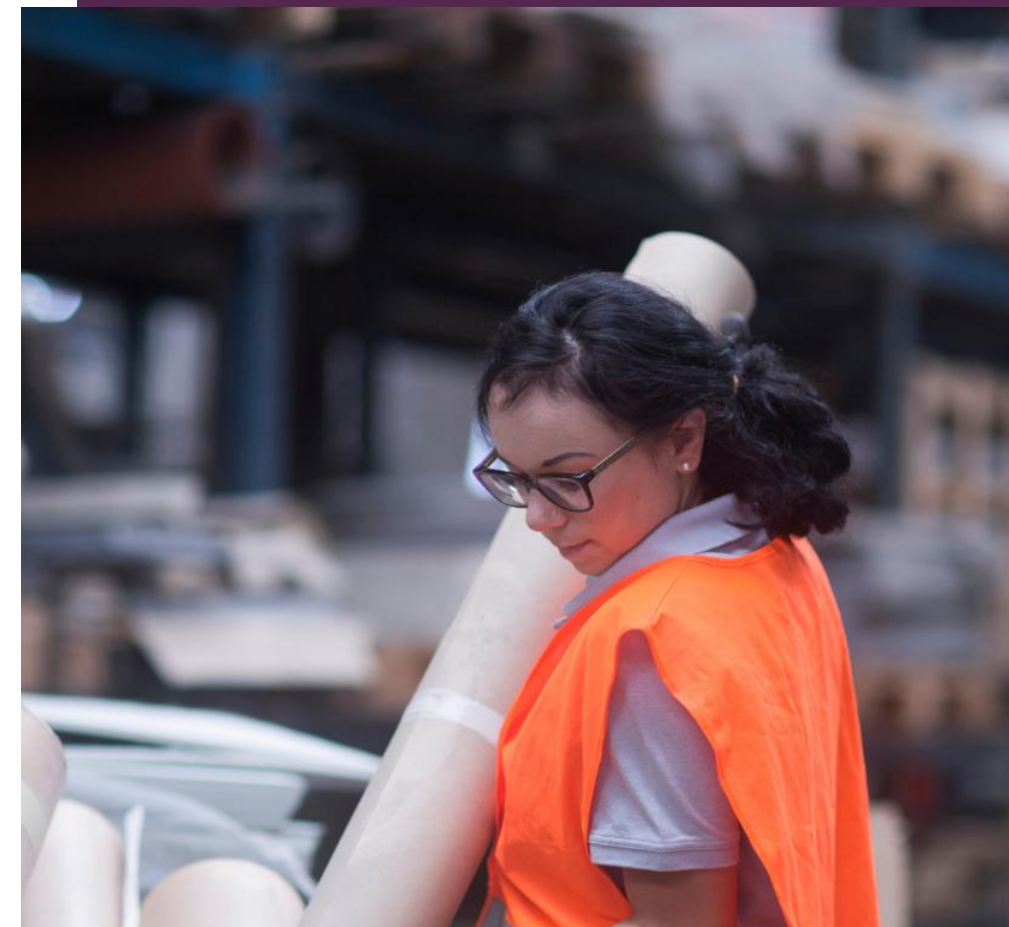
To address discrimination, organisations should **actively promote fairness, inclusivity, and equal opportunities** through clear **policies and procedures**.



Eliminating discrimination

How common is discrimination?

- **One in six people** worldwide has experienced discrimination in some form, with **women and people with disabilities** disproportionately affected.
- **Workplace harassment:** A 2022 [global survey](#) by the ILO and Lloyd's Register Foundation found that **nearly 23% of employed people** have experienced violence or harassment at work, including **physical, psychological, or sexual violence**.
- **Gender and migration factors:**
 - Young women are **twice as likely** as young men to report sexual harassment.
 - Migrant women report sexual harassment at **nearly double** the rate of non-migrant women.
- **Underreporting:** Many incidents are **not reported** due to fear, stigma or lack of confidence in enforcement systems.
- **International frameworks:**
 - [UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) guarantees the **same rights and freedoms for everyone**, regardless of race, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other status.
 - [UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) aims to **end discrimination against women** in all areas of life – political, economic, social, cultural, and civil.
- **Implementation gap:** While these conventions provide a foundation for policy, legal and cultural changes, enforcement varies widely across countries.



Relevant ILO Conventions

[C111 – Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) Convention, 1958](#)

[C100 – Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951](#)

[C190 – Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019](#)

Eliminating discrimination

Resources

Useful introductory films

- [Geneva Office for Human Rights Education: Discrimination \(We Are All Equal\)](#) (1 min) - A quick explainer of the issue.

Guidance and reading

- [ETI: Base Code guidance: Gender equality](#) - Aims to support businesses to understand likely gender issues in their supply chains and how to respond to them.
- [Oxfam & Sainsbury's: the Tackling Discrimination Supplier Toolkit](#) - A Toolkit on tackling discrimination in own operations and the supply chain.
- [UKAid: Toolkit for business: Investing in Women's Economic Empowerment](#) - A toolkit focused on investing in women's economic empowerment to strengthen supply chain resilience.
- [ETI: Base Code Guidance: Disability](#) - Guidance for companies on disability in global supply chains.
- [UN Women Empowerment Principles: Understanding Intersectionality](#) - Guidance on how to address discrimination in the workplace using an intersectional lens.

Eliminating discrimination

Support organisations

- **Women Working Worldwide**

Supports and empowers women workers in global supply chains by partnering with grassroots groups, advising companies, and advocating for gender equality and fair wages.

<https://www.women-ww.org/>

- **CARE International**

Global humanitarian and development organisation fighting poverty and inequality, with a strong focus on empowering women and girls.

<https://www.careinternational.org.uk/>

- **International Disability Alliance (IDA)**

A global alliance of persons with disabilities' organisations that promotes the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, advocates for disability rights in international forums, and works on removing barriers, stigma, and discrimination.

<https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/>



Safe and healthy working environments



Safe and healthy work environments

Globally nearly **3 million people** die each year from work-related accidents and diseases. Over **330,000** of those deaths are from workplace accidents and **2.6 million** are from fatal work-related diseases.

Around **400 million workers** experience **non-fatal accidents**, causing serious injuries and time of work. **160 million cases** of non-fatal work-related diseases are estimated to occur annually. ([Source: ILO 2023](#))

The [economic cost of workplace accidents and diseases](#) is estimated at roughly 4% of global GDP each year. But of course, the impacts on workers and their families are utterly incalculable.

The [ILO defines occupational health and safety](#) (OHS) as, “*The discipline dealing with the prevention of work-related injuries and diseases, as well as the protection and promotion of the health of workers.*”

Workers have a **right to safe and healthy work environments**. Employers have moral and legal responsibilities to protect workers’ health and wellbeing – often called ‘**duty of care**’.

Key to this is taking a ‘**prevention first**’ approach, which seeks to identify hazards and reduce risks before they cause harm.

[Research](#) shows that workplaces with **trade union health and safety committees** have **half the injury rate** of those without, linking OHS to the fundamental **right to freedom of association and collective bargaining**.



Relevant ILO Conventions

[C155 – Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981](#)

[C184 – Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001](#)

[C187 – Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006](#)

[C192 – Biological Hazards in the Working Environment Convention, 2025](#)

[R209 – Biological Hazards in the Working Environment Recommendation, 2025](#)

Risk assessment

A risk assessment is a structured “process of identifying hazards and evaluating any associated risks within a workplace, then implementing reasonable control measures to remove or reduce them.” ([Source: British Safety Council](#))

Hazard vs. risk

- A **hazard** is anything that could cause harm (e.g. wet floor, hazardous chemical, faulty machinery).
- **Risk** is the likelihood and severity of harm occurring from that hazard (e.g. injury, ill-health, damage, loss).

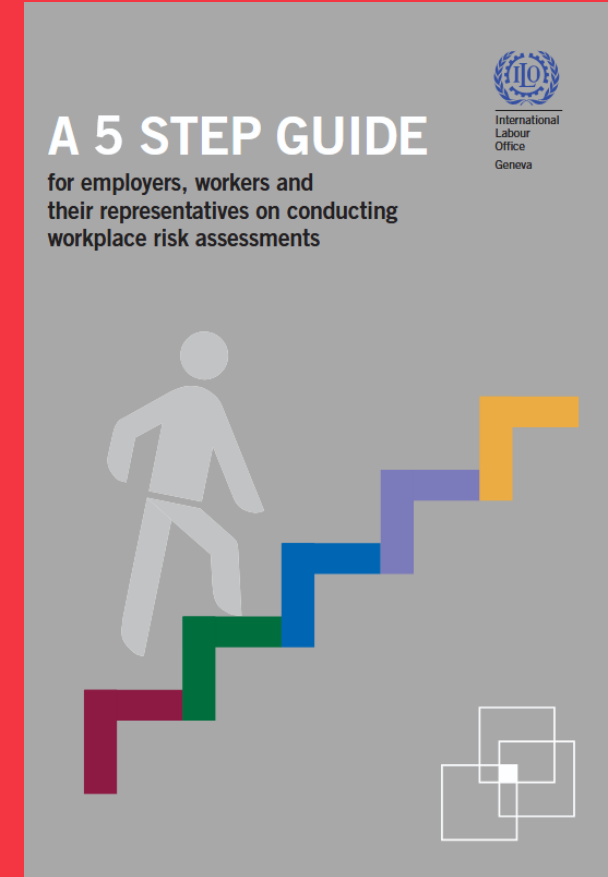
Why it matters

Preventing work-related injuries and illness requires employers to undertake regular, thorough risk assessments, that are reviewed and updated over time.

The risk assessment process follows five key steps

- Step 1: Identify the hazards
- Step 2: Identify who may be harmed and how
- Step 3: Evaluate the risk, decide on safety and health risk control measures
- Step 4: Record who is responsible for implementing which control measure, and the timeline.
- Step 5: Record the findings, monitor and review the risk assessment, and update when necessary.

This is explained in detail in the [ILO's 5 Step Guide](#), which includes a ready-to-use form. Workshop 3 slides show a summary of the process. The following page provides guidance on useful tools and processes to follow at Steps 1, 2 and 3.



Risk assessment – Tools for Step 1 and 2: Body Mapping

Step 1. Identify the hazards.

Step 2. Identify who may be harmed and how.

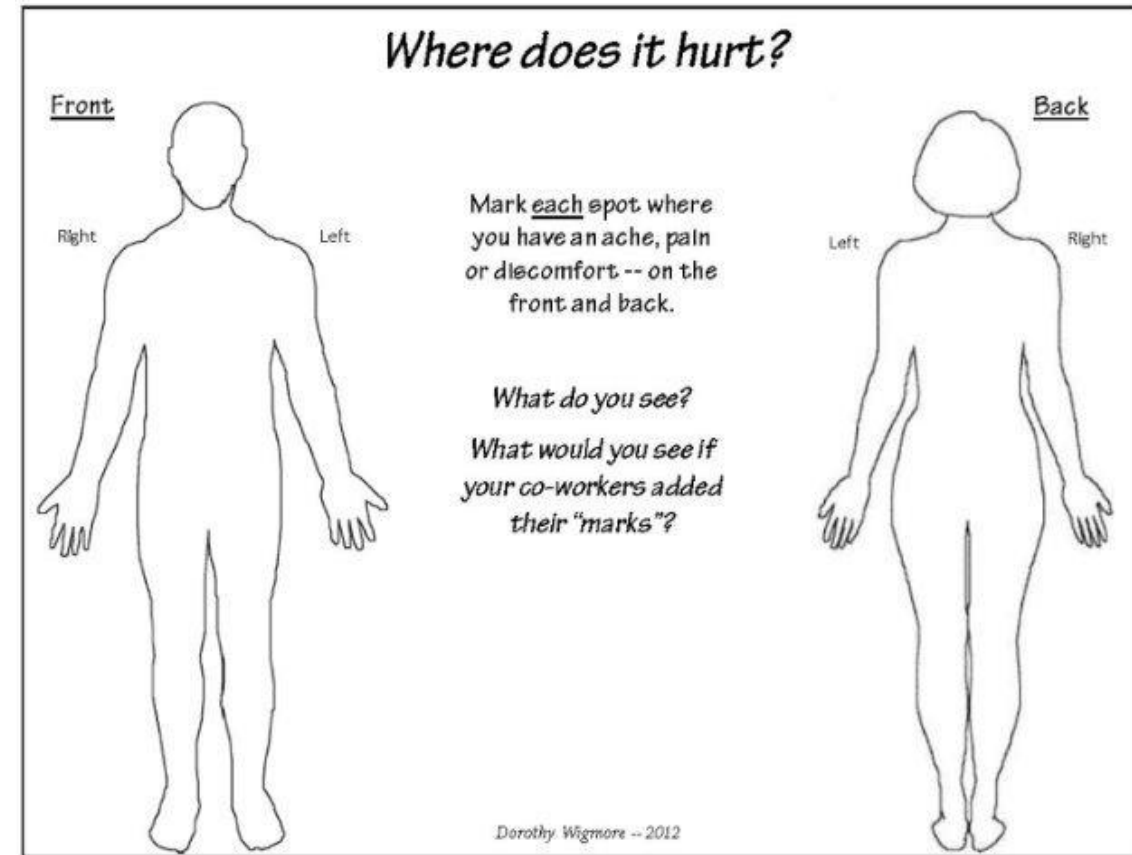
Body Mapping is an **accessible** and **inclusive** tool that helps organisations understand, directly from workers, how their jobs are affecting their health.

The tool can **help identify** a wide range of health challenges including: injuries, musculoskeletal problems, cuts, burns, respiratory issues, and stress.

It is simple and enjoyable to use, requiring only: a facilitator, a group of workers, large pieces of paper, and marker pens.

Overview of process:

- Working in groups, draw an outline of the human body, one male, one female, on large pieces of paper.
- Workers discuss where in their bodies they experience pain, injury or ill health as a result of their work.
- Mark these locations on the paper outlines using a colour code such as the one suggested here.
- Compare the maps - there may be differences in health impacts between genders and job roles.
- Use the body maps to guide discussions about workplace hazards, who is affected and how.



RED: Aches and pains, strains and sprains that may develop over time in the back, neck or shoulders (because of bad posture, repetition or stretching) or because of lifting heavy or awkward loads.



BLACK: Anything else like stress, headaches, hearing loss, respiratory/breathing problems etc



BLUE: Pain resulting from cuts and bruises, breaks and fractures, burns or skin rashes.



GREEN: Any other illness or health symptoms

Risk assessment – Tools for Step 1 and 2: Hazard mapping

Step 1. Identify the hazards.

Step 2. Identify who may be harmed and how.

Workers know their workplaces and work routines best. **Hazard mapping** is an **accessible** and **inclusive tool** that enables workers themselves to indicate **where hazards occur** in their workplace. It can cover hazards of all kinds (physical, chemical, biological, psychosocial) – and can be used to indicate severity. It can **help reveal hidden hazards** that may not appear in standard audits or inspections.

Overview of process:

- Use a floor plan of the workplace, or draw one.
- Ask a group of workers to discuss and mark on the plan where they encounter hazards as they work and label what these are.
- Use a colour scheme to specify which are chemical, physical, ergonomic, psychosocial, or biological hazards.
- Discuss with workers which hazards are most serious, and which they are most likely to encounter.
- Where appropriate, discuss the hazard map jointly with any body maps that have been produced – this can help reveal links between exposure and injuries/illnesses.
- Plan actions – use the hazard maps to help decide on risk control measures.
- Review and update the maps regularly, including after changes to workplaces or incidents.

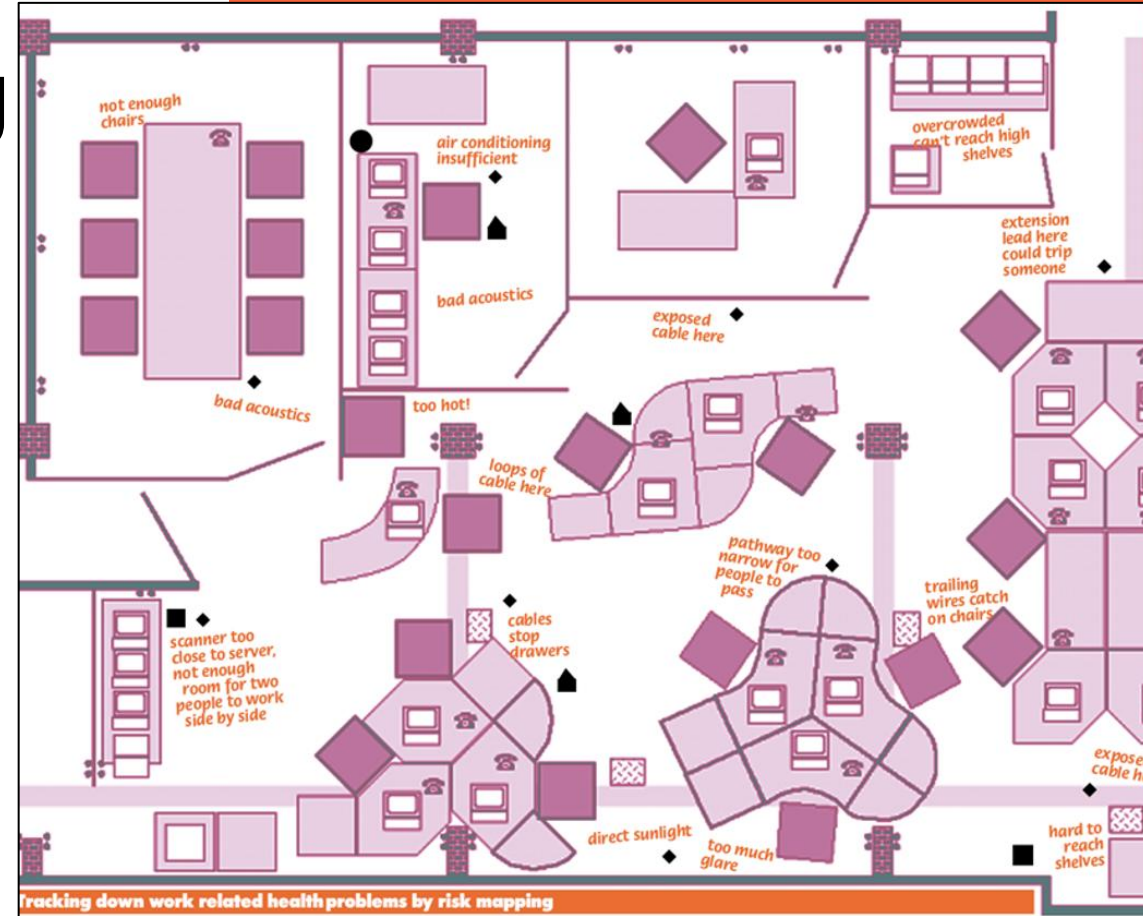


Image source: Hazards magazine, vol. 60, 1997

Further information

[Hazards Magazine - Hazard Mapping](#)

[OSHA - Hazard Mapping](#)

Risk assessment – Step 3

Step 3. Evaluate the risk, decide on safety and health risk control measures.

Remember: A hazard is something that has “the potential to cause harm”, and **risk** is the **likelihood and severity** of harm resulting from a hazard (e.g. injury, ill-health, damage, loss).
(Source: [British Safety Council](#))

How to evaluate risk

Use a risk matrix (like the one shown here) to help decide how serious the risk is. For each hazard, pick the likelihood of the harm occurring from the first column. Pick the severity of the harm/consequence from the top row. Where these meet shows the position of the risk on the matrix, and its overall risk category (low, medium, high, and critical).

What do to next

Focus on the highest ranking risks first. Critical and high risks must be addressed urgently.

CONSEQUENCE					
	1. INSIGNIFICANT Dealt with by in-house first aid	2. MINOR Treated by medical professionals, hospital day patient	3. MODERATE Significant non-permanent injury, overnight hospital stay	4. MAJOR Extensive permanent injury, extended hospital stay e.g. loss of finger	5. CATASTROPHIC Death, permanent disability, e.g. loss of limb
LIKELIHOOD	A. Almost certain to occur in most circumstances	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	CRITICAL
	B. Likely to occur frequently	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	CRITICAL
	C. Possibly and likely to occur at sometime	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
	D. Unlikely to occur but could happen	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
	E. May occur but only in rare circumstances	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM

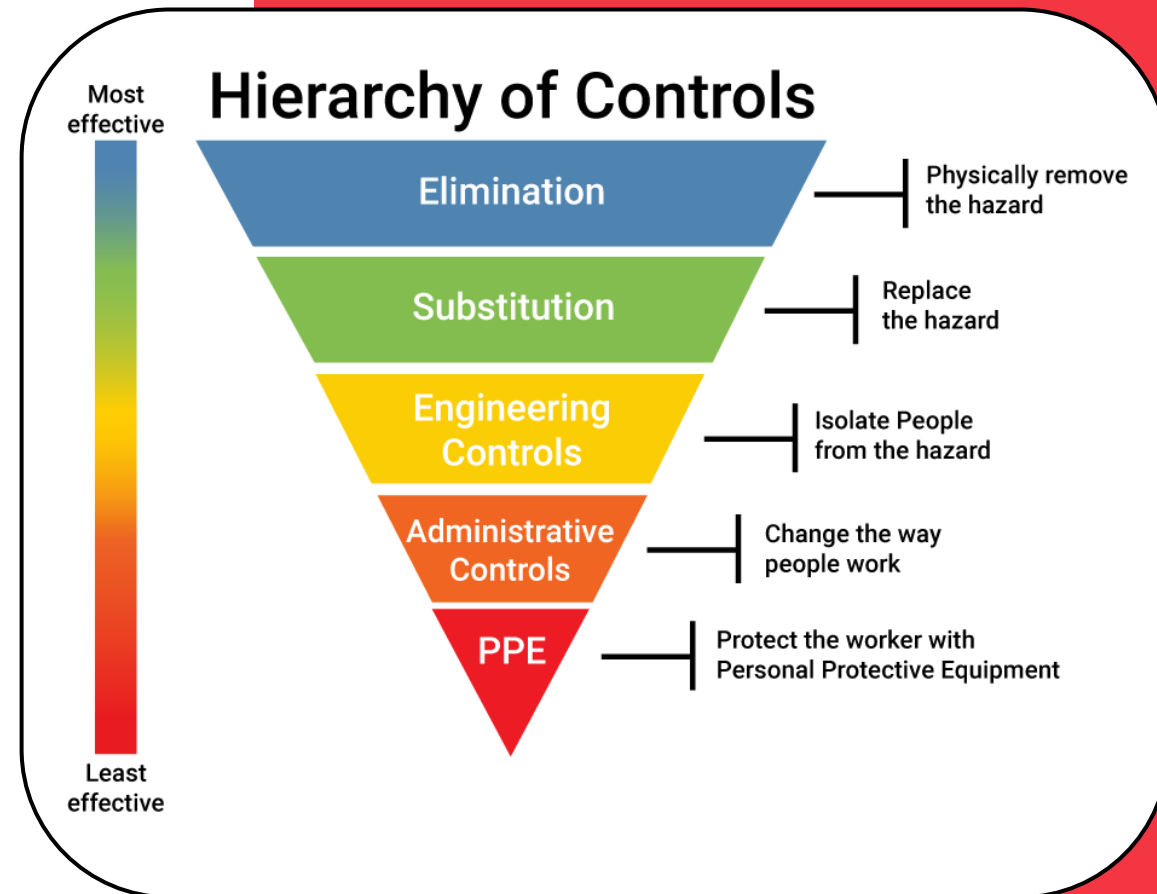
Risk assessment – Tools for Step 3: Hierarchy of controls

Step 3 – Evaluate the risk, decide on safety and health risk control measures.

When deciding how to control a risk, the [Hierarchy of Controls](#) helps guide decisions. It tells you to start with the **most effective measures** first. Where this is not feasible, proceed through a series of steps, all of which aim to reduce the risk, but with decreasing levels of effectiveness.

1. **Elimination** removes the risk completely, e.g. removing the hazardous material.
2. **Substitution** swaps the material, tool or process to one that is less hazardous, e.g. replacing a material with one that produces less dust, or that can be processed at a lower temperature.
3. **Engineering controls** prevent or reduce contact between workers and the hazard, e.g. local exhaust extraction to remove dust, or protective screens.
4. **Administrative controls** change how work is done and give workers more information, e.g. training to workers on new procedures, increased equipment inspections, hazard warning signs.
5. **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** provide workers with clothing and devices that provide protection, as well as the training and support to ensure proper and consistent use, e.g. face masks, hardhats, hearing protectors.

The **most effective control is elimination**. Measures lower down the hierarchy are less effective: PPE is the least effective. Where complete elimination is not feasible, often a **combination of control measures** are used.



Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Risk assessment

Overall recommendations

- **Involve workers:** The experiences, views and recommendations of workers are critical to thorough risk assessment. As per the guidance included in the [ILO's 5 Step Guide](#), Step 1 to identify hazards should include **walking around the worksite and talking to workers** about hazards and ideas to make the workplace safer. **Workers know the workplace and their routines best.**
- **Include health and safety committees:** Where they exist, **involve committee members at every stage** of the process. Where they don't exist, consider establishing them – to learn how, see workshop 3 slides for a case-study from Bangladesh. **Remember:** Research shows that workplaces with trade union health and safety committees experience **half the injury rate** of those without.
- **Build on existing controls:** Step 3 includes a review of the existing control measures to reduce risk. Use what is already in place, rather than starting from scratch.
- **Focus on actions, not forms:** Risk assessment forms are a **tool to guide action**. Clearly record the required control measures, who will implement these and by when. Use the ILO template to tick and date when each agreed action has been completed.
- **Ongoing process:** Risk assessment is **not a one-off activity**. Set a review date on the form, and review and update whenever significant changes are made in the workplace; such as the introduction of new technology, a change in the number of workers, or a rearrangement of the workplace.



Gender and GBVH

Gender-based discrimination and occupational health and safety (OHS) are often treated separately, but this separation increases risks to workers' health and wellbeing. Women and men often face different OHS risks due to a variety of factors including biological differences, job segregation (who does which roles), and societal gender roles.

Examples:

- In workplaces dominated by men in senior roles, **women-specific risks may be overlooked** due to lack of awareness.
- Where risks are experienced similarly by women and men, the **control measures put in place may be more effective for one gender than the other**, (e.g. PPE designed for average male sizes may not fit women, reducing protection).

Gender-responsive approach

A gender-responsive approach acknowledges the differences between men and women workers, identifying their differing risks and proposing preventative measures, to ensure that effective solutions are provided – Steps 1 to 3 of the risk assessment process. Without a gender-responsive approach to OHS, workplaces may **fail in their duty of care** to protect all workers from harm. Include **women worker representatives on OHS committees** and **provide training and support**.

Gender-based violence and harassment

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) affects the physical and mental health and wellbeing of workers. [ILO's convention C190](#) states that violence and harassment and associated psychosocial risks must be taken into account in the management of OHS. GBVH within the workplace should be **included in risk assessments**, enabling employers to **put in place measures to prevent it**.



Useful resources

[ETI's guide to gender responsive OHS](#)

Climate risks

Climate change is causing **more extreme weather**, such as **heatwaves and floods**. These events **create serious risks** for workers, both indoors and outdoors.

A [recent ILO report](#) highlighted that more than **70% of workers** around the world face climate change-related health risks, with more than **2.4 billion** people likely to be exposed to excessive heat on the job.

2024 was the hottest year since the pre-industrial age and each decade since the 1980s has been warmer than the previous. Periods of extreme heat are becoming **more frequent and more severe**, with drastic impacts on health and mortality.

Meanwhile, from 2010 to 2020, floods and [extreme rainfall events rose 50%](#). The [UN estimates 1.6 billion people](#) will be at risk of floods by **2050**, up from 1.2 billion today.

What this means for workplaces

- Climate-related risks are **growing in frequency and severity**.
- **Workplace risk assessments** must identify and **address risks from extreme heat, flooding, and other weather events**.
- Measures should **protect all workers** and consider both **indoor and outdoor work settings**.



Useful resources

[ETI Extreme Heat Snapshot](#)

[ETI Flooding Snapshot](#)

[ETI webinar on Extreme heat](#)

Safe and healthy work environments

Resources

Useful introductory films

- [Institution of Occupational Safety and Health: OSH as a fundamental right](#) (2 min) - short film introducing OHS as a fundamental human right
- [Health and Safety Executive: Health and safety risk assessment and management](#) (2 min) - quick introduction to risk assessment

Guidance and reading

- [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\): A 5 Step Guide](#) - A guide for employers, workers and representatives on workplace risk assessments. Available in multiple languages.
- [Trades Union Congress: Guides and reports for health and safety reps](#) - An extensive selection of guides and reports on a wide range of OHS issues.
- [ILO: Safety and health at work](#) - A portal with links to ILO reports, guidance and training modules.
- [Hazards Magazine](#) - An online resource with guidance and support on a wide range of workplace hazards.
- [US Occupational Health and Safety Administration: Identifying Hazard Control Options: The Hierarchy of Controls](#) - A guide to using the hierarchy of controls.
- [ETI: Gender-responsive occupational safety and health in supply chains](#) - A guide that supports companies to apply a gender lens to OHS.

Safe and healthy work environments

Support organisations

- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

The global authority on all aspects of decent work, with a specialist team focused on OHS, and offices in many countries and regions.

<https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/safety-and-health-work>

- **Trades Union Congress**

The national federation of trade unions in England and Wales, representing workers and advocating for their rights, fair pay, and decent work.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/>

- **International Trade Union Confederation**

Unites trade unions worldwide to defend workers' rights, promote decent work, and campaign for social and economic justice.

<https://www.ituc-csi.org/>



Worker voice, agency, representation



Freedom of association and collective bargaining

Freedom of association — the right of workers to form or join organisations of their own choosing — and collective bargaining — the process through which workers and employers negotiate employment terms — are **internationally recognised human rights**. They are enshrined in the ILO's core conventions ([C087](#), [C098](#), [C154](#)) and **form the foundation of decent work**.

Independent worker representation gives workers a voice to challenge exploitation and unfair treatment. When workers are able to organise and bargain collectively, they are better positioned to improve wages, safety, working hours, and respect on the job — all of which **contribute to more resilient and productive workplaces**.

Companies that actively support worker representation and build constructive relationships with unions can benefit in tangible ways. A workforce that has a say in how work is organised is **more motivated, more productive, and less likely to leave**. Unionised workplaces tend to have **lower accident rates, fewer disputes, and better compliance with labour standards**.

Developing constructive working relationships between worker representatives and management enables workplaces to proactively address issues before they escalate and become problems. This **builds trust, reduces risk**, and is invariably **more cost effective** than waiting until after the event.

Forward-looking businesses recognise that respecting union rights is not just a legal obligation or a matter of ethical responsibility. It is a strategic approach to workforce engagement, risk management, and long-term sustainability.



Relevant ILO Conventions

[C087 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948](#)

[C098 – Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949](#)

[C154 - Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981](#)

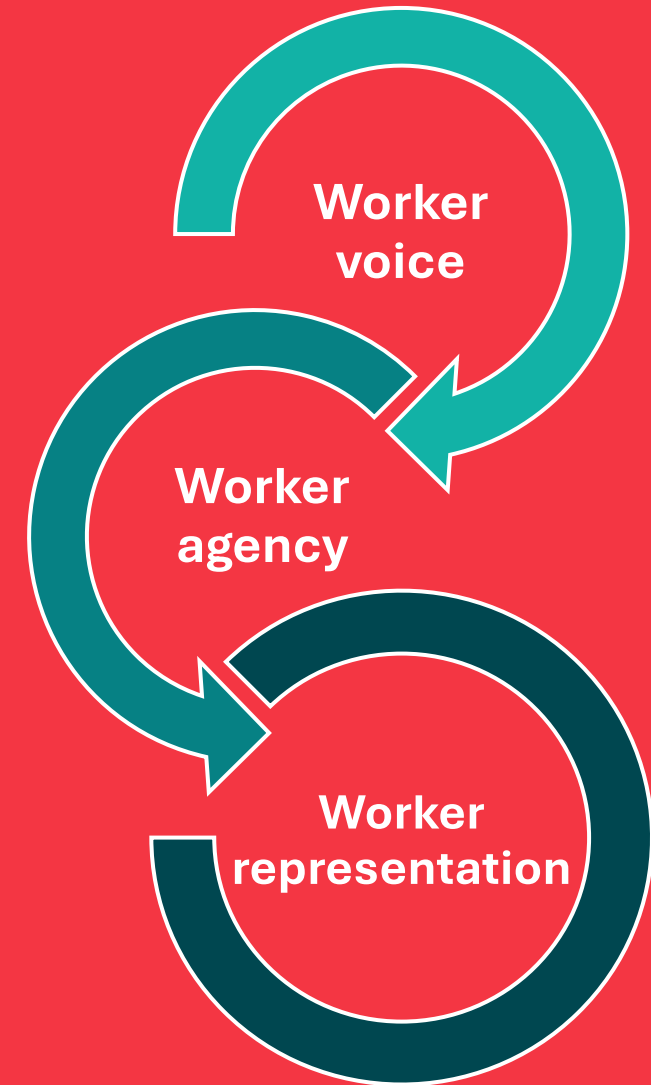
Worker voice, agency, representation

Getting started on freedom of association

As explained, freedom of association and collective bargaining are internationally recognised human rights. They form the foundation of decent work, and enable safer, more productive workplaces and improve working conditions.

However, in some parts of the world, and in some sectors more than others, employers and employees may feel unsure about how to get started in this area. In this instance the following schema can be helpful.

- Start by introducing **worker voice** mechanisms in the workplace. These may include confidential grievance reporting channels and annual employee surveys. These enable workers to communicate issues and priorities to management; enabling management in turn to understand and respond.
- Develop a culture that supports **worker agency**. Train and support managers to consult with and seek ideas from their team members. Empower managers to delegate. Create an organisational culture that enables employees to develop autonomy over key areas of their work.
- Create and support structures that enable **worker representation**. In the first instance these may be worker committees organised around specific issues, such as health and safety, or diversity and inclusion, or environmental stewardship. Committee members should be elected by their colleagues and work collaboratively with management on these issues. As these structures mature and institutionalise, their remit can broaden to include all areas of relevance and concern to employees and employers. The **final step and end goal** here is to welcome **trade union representation** in the workplace, underpinned by a **collective bargaining agreement** between workers and management.



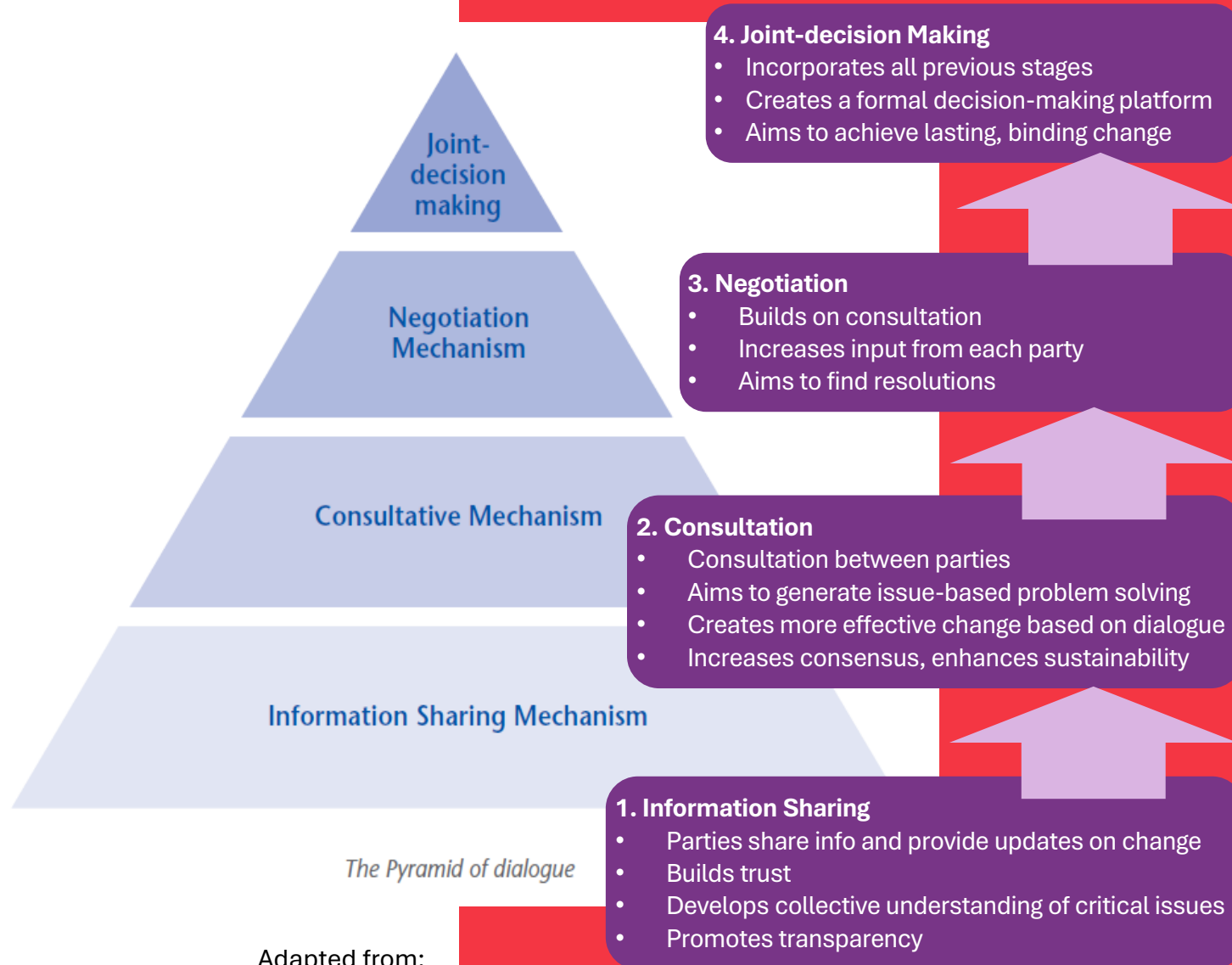
Social dialogue

The ILO defines social dialogue as “all types of negotiation, consultation and exchange of information between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.”

At a **workplace level** (rather than a sectoral level), social dialogue often takes place **between employers and workers**, without the presence of government representatives.

Social dialogue is the process through which workers have a **voice and a stake** in their workplace. It enables **workers and management to understand each others' perspectives**, develop **trust**, and **find shared solutions** to workplace challenges.

The diagram on the right summarises **four key stages of social dialogue**, from the simplest and most rudimentary (information sharing), to the more challenging but effective (joint-decision making).



The Pyramid of dialogue

Adapted from:
Warwick Business School (2017),
From social auditing to social dialogue...

Freedom of association and collective bargaining

Resources

- [ETI: Trade unions, structure](#) - A short introduction to how trade unions work and how they are structured globally.
- [ETI: Implementing freedom of association - a five-step plan](#) - A multilingual five-step plan guides companies to implement freedom of Association.
- [Oxfam: Grievance Mechanism Toolkit](#) - A toolkit on how to design and implement effective grievance mechanisms.
- [SHIFT & Mondiaal FNV: Respecting Trade Union Rights in Global Value Chains: Practical Approaches for Business](#) - A resource to equip companies with practical ideas and tools.
- [ETI: Safe Spaces](#) - A report that brings a gender lens to this topic. It includes a series of case-studies of women worker representatives and their organisations around the world.

Freedom of association and collective bargaining

Support organisations

- **Trades Union Congress**

The national federation of trade unions in England and Wales, representing workers and advocating for their rights, fair pay, and decent work.

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/>

- **International Trade Union Confederation**

Unites trade unions worldwide to defend workers' rights, promote decent work, and campaign for social and economic justice.

<https://www.ituc-csi.org/>

- **WIEGO**

A global network that supports workers in informal employment. With strong links to and expertise in circular economy, waste and recycling.

<https://www.wiego.org/>



ITUC CSI IGB



Women in Informal Employment
Globalizing and Organizing

**Next steps –
continuous
improvements
to meet global
standards**



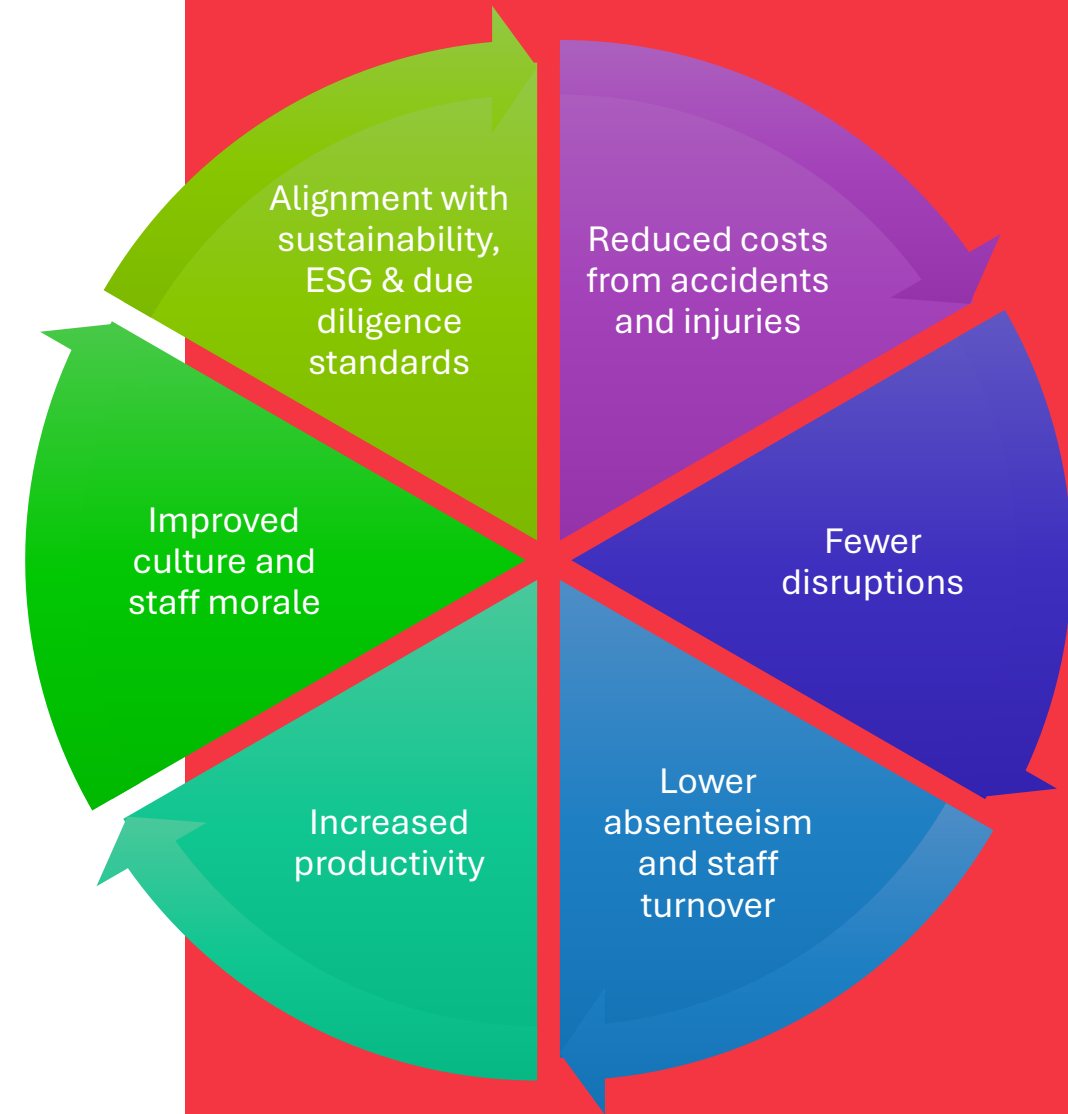
Continuous improvements to meet global standards

Organisations that strengthen their practice in relation to decent work and occupational health and safety – thereby fulfilling their commitments to the ILO's [Fundamental principles and rights at work](#) – will experience a **variety of benefits**, including those captured in the graphic here.

The next step on the journey is to progress towards **a broader set of standards**, that include but build on the topics covered in this resource pack and the accompanying workshops.

The [ETI Base Code](#) is one such set of standards. It is an internationally recognised code of labour practice, used extensively in workplaces and supply chains across the globe. Its nine clauses are included on the following slide. Each of these includes a selection of sub-clauses.

The full version of the Base Code and with accompanying guidance is [available online](#), and in multiple languages.



The ETI Base Code

The ETI base code is an international code of labour standards.
Members of ETI must commit to implementing the ETI Base Code.



Employment is freely
chosen



Freedom of association
& the right to collective
bargaining



Safe and hygienic working
conditions



No child labour



Living wages are paid



Working hours are not excessive



No discrimination



Regular employment



No inhumane treatment

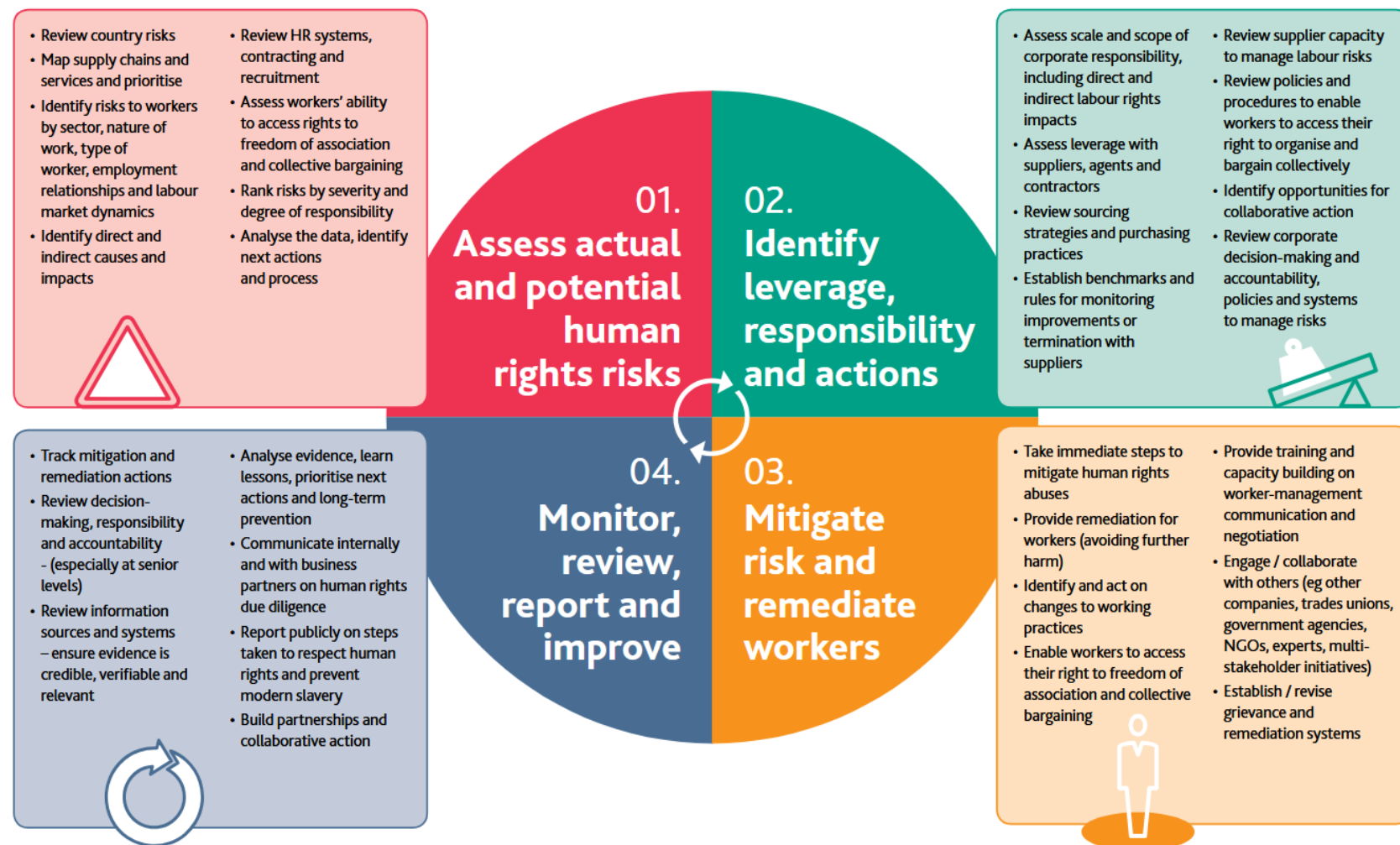
Human rights and environmental due diligence

Human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) is a **continuous cycle of identifying, preventing, mitigating, and remediating risks to people and the environment** connected to a company's activities, value chains, and business relationships. It includes a focus on workers and their rights, but extends the remit to include other people affected by a businesses' activities, such as local community members. In this ways it builds upon the recommendations in this resource pack around the fundamental principles and rights at work.

HREDD has become a **standard expectation of responsible businesses globally**. It is rooted in the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) which set out businesses' responsibility to respect human rights. The [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#) (OECD) has issued guidelines, including specific sector advice, to help enterprises to operationalise these principles through HREDD.

The diagram here illustrates the **key steps in a HREDD cycle**. A full guide for companies is [available from ETI here](#).

Of particular relevance for businesses in the leather sector is [this recently launched 'getting started' guide](#).



Annex 1 – A completed risk assessment



Risk assessment

Company name: GHI Logistics

Assessment carried out by: JH Reynolds

Date assessment carried out: 3/10/19

Example: A completed risk assessment, pg.1

Explore an example completed risk assessment for a warehouse on this page and the next. See the structure of the risk assessment (based on the 5 Step process) and the level of detail required.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Falls from height	Staff could suffer severe or fatal injuries if they fell while climbing racking.	All staff are given strict instructions never to climb racking – monitored by supervisors.	Share this risk assessment with regular contractors. Check their awareness of health and safety issues and ensure they give health and safety information to any staff new to the site.	Manager	30/10/19	30/10/19
	Staff could suffer severe or fatal injuries if they fell while changing light bulbs in the high ceiling.	Proprietary forklift cage used by maintenance worker for changing bulbs. Cage supplier's information shows it is manufactured to standard.	Train maintenance worker to check cage is in good condition and properly secured before each use.	Manager and maintenance worker	15/10/19	14/10/19
	Staff or contractor could suffer severe or fatal injuries falling through	No controls in place.	Agree with maintenance worker that a contractor will be used for any access to the roof.	Manager and maintenance worker	14/10/19	14/10/19

Source: Health & Safety Executive (UK) [Example risk assessment for a warehouse](#)

Example: Completed risk assessment, pg.2

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Fire • Bulk storage of easily burnt materials • Ignited through electrical fault, battery recharging etc	If trapped in the warehouse, all staff and visitors could suffer from smoke inhalation or burns which could potentially kill.	• Building designed with fire-resisting materials. • Exits/fire exits marked and kept clear. • Fire extinguishers well located. • Clear access kept at all times to all exits and fire extinguishers. • Fire detection and alarm system. • Each fire alarm point displays evacuation procedures. • Maintenance contracts for extinguishers and detection/alarm system. • Annual fire drill and training in correct use of extinguisher. • Cleaner ensures no debris left. • Staff trained in good housekeeping.	Talk to insurer about providing automatically closing, roller-shutter doors linked to the fire alarm.	Manager	16/10/19	16/10/19
Hazardous substances Vehicle exhaust fumes Bleach and cleaning fluids Recharging of forklift truck batteries – potential explosion through release of	Fumes may irritate eyes, cause respiratory irritation. May irritate cleaner's skin, or vapour cause eye irritation breathing difficulties. Burns or fractures from material ejected could affect any worker	• Only few vehicles delivering so exposure is limited, which prevents build-up of fumes. • Drivers not allowed to leave engines running. • Roller-shutter doors and windows kept open, to assist ventilation. • Cleaner told safe procedures. Rubber gloves used. • First-aid facilities (including eye wash) are readily available. • Batteries charged in designated bay that is well ventilated. Safe system of work used which includes provision and use of	No further action required. Investigate availability of safer alternatives for cleaner. Supervisor to monitor and ensure protective equipment is being worn.	Supervisor Supervisor		

Source: Health & Safety Executive (UK) [Example risk assessment for a warehouse](#)



**Ethical
Trading
Initiative**



For more information:
info@eti.org.uk

www.ethicaltrade.org

**For human rights,
for better business**