

Overview of Mitsui Chemicals human rights impact assessment (FY2022)

Background

In 2021, we identified and assessed the potential human rights risks in the Mitsui Chemicals Group (human rights risk assessment) in collaboration with CRT Japan. One of the findings was that the indirect employees (dispatch workers and contractors) of our Works may be in a vulnerable position, and they require particular attention.

Considering that the working environment for non-Japanese workers is one of the most prominent human rights challenges in Japan, we decided to conduct a survey on the actual condition at our domestic Works located in areas with a large number of non-Japanese workers* to confirm the situation of indirect employees in FY2022.

*Reference: [Summary of the filing situation of “Employment Situation of Non-Japanese People” \(as of the end of October 2021\) | Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare \(mhlw.go.jp\)](#)

Objective

To identify and assess our evident negative impact on the human rights of rights holders (human rights impact assessment) with the aim of preventing and mitigating it.

Procedure

(1) Select interviewees.

We selected and grouped dispatch workers and contractors while taking the shift schedule of each workplace into consideration.

(2) Conduct a preliminary survey.

We conducted a paper-based survey for the interviewees on their working environment.

(3) Conduct interviews.

We followed the steps below.

- ① We created interview questions by referring to the preliminary survey responses, the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity* and other international guidelines.
- ② CRT Japan conducted the interview as a third party to ensure objectivity and neutrality.
- ③ We made sure to protect the interviewees' privacy and that they would not suffer negative consequences for their remarks.
- ④ After interviewing the workers, we conducted management interviews for their managers (business partners).

* The Dhaka Principles: Created by the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) in the U.K., it has been endorsed by businesses, governments, trade unions, and civil societies as an important principle that serves as a roadmap for the entire journey of workers, from recruitment to employment and contract termination. They consist of ten principles around the two core principles of “equal treatment no discrimination” and “all workers enjoy the protection of employment law.”

Interview questions

Introduction		How did you find this job?
		Describe your job.
		Where did you work before you began to work here?
		How long have you been working here?
Questions	Human rights	Do you receive training on human rights?
	Appropriate working hours	How many hours of overtime do you work?
		Can you rest well on your days off?
	Fair wage	Are you compensated for overtime work?
		Are you compensated for late night shifts?
	Occupational safety and health	Have you received guidance and training on occupational safety?
		Does your workplace take appropriate safety measures?
		Do you get health checkups?
		Do you take evacuation drills?
	Communication	Do you have someone to speak to when you have a work or personal problem?
		Do you ask someone for advice in case of an issue, problem, etc.?
	Other	Is there anything you think should be improved about your workplace?
Are you happy with your job?		

Currently confirming employment types (employment contract), types of housing, and means of commute.

Results

- ① Based on these interviews, we did not identify evident negative impact on the human rights of our dispatch workers and contractors. However, we were able to identify the following potential human rights risks* requiring our attention.

*Human rights risks: Potentially negative impacts that a company may have on human rights and risks for rights holders. (Refer to 17 of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights)

Fair wage

- Some of those working in harsh working environments have requested additional pay.

Occupational safety and health

- Education other than on safety is not prevalent enough, especially among contractors.
- Although evacuation drills are conducted periodically, there was none for night shifts.

Right to collective bargaining

- It is suspected that the right to collective bargaining of contractors and dispatched workers do not enjoy sufficient consideration.

Access to remedies

- We need to establish a functional grievance mechanism for contractors and dispatched workers.

Other

- We identified many instances where contractors, in particular, did not have a full understanding of the situation. Example: Concerns about insufficient handover of tasks, dissatisfaction with workload.
 - Some contractors reported negative impact on their work and stress caused by an increase in the workload of small-group activities.
 - Many said that it is impossible to maintain their living wages due to the decrease in overtime and work.
- ② The survey showed that the surveyed Works had very few non-Japanese employees. In addition, they were very proficient in the Japanese language, and we did not identify human rights risks specific to non-Japanese workers, such as language barriers for work.