



Accreditation of FLA Participating Companies

Why Accreditation?

Since the Fair Labor Association's formation in 1999 (an outgrowth of the Apparel Industry Partnership), the non-profit organization has diligently worked toward improving working conditions worldwide. In collaboration with its multi-stakeholder partners – NGOs, universities and brands – improvements can be made through sustainable compliance programs that focus on independent monitoring, remediation and verification. It soon became evident that by accrediting compliance programs, the FLA demonstrates its commitment to holding companies accountable and working to meet the core labor standards.

What is Accreditation?

Accreditation signifies that a Participating Company's workplace standards program is in substantial compliance with FLA requirements at the completion of the company's initial implementation period. The company can choose a two- or three-year initial implementation period. The Board of Directors bases its decision on criteria derived from the [Obligations of Companies](#) as defined in the FLA's [Charter](#).

Why does the FLA accredit a program and not the company?

The reason can be summarized in three main points:

- Focusing on a labor compliance program, rather than a company or brand, captures what is being evaluated by the FLA. It is viewed as a more accurate claim for companies to make, and therefore, in today's context, is a more appropriate one.
- The use of "program" highlights that this is an ongoing process, rather than a singular achievement or one-time award.
- It provides more flexibility for the diverse group of companies reaching this status. For example, this designation would be as suitable for a company that seeks accreditation for a particular segment of its product lines (such as footwear, without apparel), as for a company with many applicable brands.

How does a Participating Company become accredited?

When a company joins the FLA, it commits to establishing a workplace standards program that complies with FLA requirements, and chooses either a two- or three-year period in which to do so. The FLA carries out an in-depth evaluation of the company's

performance at the end of the designated period. In addition to this evaluation, the FLA also issues an annual public report on each participating company each year and publishes charts on its website that report on the monitoring of factories by the FLA's accredited independent external monitors. In accordance with the FLA Charter, the staff and Board evaluate the extent to which a company has:

- Adopted and communicated the Workplace Code of Conduct to workers and management at applicable facilities.
- Trained internal compliance staff to monitor and remediate noncompliance issues.
- Conducted internal monitoring of applicable facilities.
- Submitted to unannounced, independent external monitoring visits to factories throughout its supply chain.
- Remediated noncompliance issues in a timely manner.
- Acted to prevent persistent patterns of noncompliance, or instances of serious noncompliance.
- Collected and managed compliance information effectively.
- Provided workers with confidential reporting channels to report on noncompliance issues to the company.
- Consulted with non-governmental organizations, unions and other local experts in its work.
- Paid FLA dues and met other procedural and administrative requirements.

If the FLA determines that a company's compliance program has substantially fulfilled these requirements, the program receives FLA accreditation. Accredited programs are reviewed for re-accreditation every two years. The FLA retains the right to retract FLA accreditation at any time if it finds that a company is not acting in good faith to uphold its FLA obligations.

How will the consumer know if a company has been accredited?

Information about accredited companies is available on the FLA website (www.fairlabor.org) and will be included in the FLA's third Annual Public Report. Additionally, companies with accredited compliance programs are authorized to use the FLA service mark, *Fair Labor Association Accredited Compliance Program*.SM

What is the Workplace Code of Conduct?

The FLA Workplace Code of Conduct specifies compliance with forced labor, child labor, harassment, abuse, nondiscrimination, health and safety, freedom of association and collective bargaining, wages and benefits, hours of work, and overtime compensation.

For more information on FLA and its initiatives visit www.fairlabor.org.