

Safe and hygienic accommodation



Principle:

Where accommodation is provided, it is safe, hygienic and conditions are acceptable.



Key message:

Workers' housing must be kept clean and well maintained.

Workers' accommodation

"...adequate and decent housing accommodation and a suitable living environment".¹

Why is accommodation important?

- Accommodation is often provided to workers, especially when sites operate away from communities or employ migrant workers.
- Suitable living conditions are important for protecting workers and their families' wellbeing and health.
- Accommodation must be safe, hygienic and offered at a reasonable cost to employees.
- It should also offer privacy and reasonable amounts of personal and family space.
- Everyone has the right to accommodation adequate for their health and wellbeing.

What is expected at sites?

- Risk assessments carried out to identify hygiene and injury hazards.
- Accommodation is of sound construction, with safe electrical wiring.
- Accommodation is separate from work and storage areas.
- There is access to basic services including toilets, bathing and laundry facilities, running water, electricity, and kitchen facilities - these should be hygienic and regularly cleaned.
- Adequate fire prevention and detection, and fire-fighting equipment.
- Safe access to the accommodation and sufficient exit routes.
- Protection from pollution, noise, waste or similar.
- Segregated accommodation for single men and women.
- Potable drinking water is available.

Facts

• "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including... housing."²

• *The ILO Workers' Housing Recommendation states that accommodation should be provided fairly to everyone.*³

• *The ILO Migration for Employment Convention states that migrant workers receive the same standard of accommodation as non-migrant workers.*⁴



Accommodation should be lockable from the inside

How to decide on fair prices and rents

- Fair prices can be determined by comparing local prices.
- They should be agreed between sites and workers and their representatives.
- They should consist of a reasonable amount of workers' income, and not be used to make profit for the site.

Continued...

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What is expected at sites? (continued)

- There is freedom of movement, and accommodation is lockable from the inside.
- There is separation between living areas and work sites to stop children roaming into the production area.
- Where a price is charged for living in accommodation, or for associated services and utilities, the cost must be in line with local prices.
- The cost of products sold at company stores and cafeterias must be reasonable.
- If sites are far from communities, significant effort should be made to provide transport to local communities.
- The average living space is at least 3.8m² per adult.
- Separate self-contained accommodation is provided for families.
- Lock boxes or lockers are provided for valuables and belongings.
- Workers and their families have access to leisure facilities.

What if accommodation is not safe or prices are unfair?

- If accommodation is structurally unsafe or hazardous, occupants should be moved to temporary accommodation until safe permanent housing is provided.
- Issues with cleanliness and hygiene should be immediately remedied. This may include installing toilets, washing, bathing and plumbing. It may also include recommending a housekeeping schedule for workers to implement.
- Additional housing should be constructed if there is insufficient space, segregation or privacy for families.
- If the cost of rent, services, shops or cafeterias are higher than local prices, these should be reduced through discussion with workers and their representatives.
- The costs of services and goods should reflect local prices, constitute a reasonable proportion of workers income, and not be used to generate profits for sites.

Accommodation for migrant workers

- Migrant and non-migrant works must receive the same standard of accommodation.
- Employers often have to show proof to government agencies that they can provide satisfactory housing to migrant workers.
- Schools, medical facilities and other services should be provided where there are a large number of families, and if the site is remote from other communities.



Safe and hygienic accommodation is important for workers' wellbeing and productivity at sites

Additional information and resources

- [ILO Workers' Housing Guidance](#)
- [Health and safety factsheet](#)
- [Sample - H&S risk assessment](#)