

Writing a Letter to the Brands

Checklist

1. Identify the appropriate **contact at the brand**. The best person to contact is usually the compliance or social responsibility manager. If the brand has a local representative in your country or region, you may choose to send the letter to the local representative and to the person that s/he reports to.

International labour rights organizations can help identify the appropriate brand contacts.
2. **Identify yourself**. What organization do you represent, what is your title, and what is your organization's relationship to the workers? Be sure that your letter includes information about how you or others who are working on the case can be contacted (phone numbers, email address, etc.).
3. **Specific information about the case:**
 - Which factory are you writing about?
 - What is the evidence that you have that the factory produces products for this brand?
 - What are the violations that have occurred? Provide a brief but complete summary of the case, including which management staff committed the violations.
 - What evidence do you have?
 - What laws have been violated?
 - What provision(s) of the brand's code of conduct have been violated?
 - What impact have these violations had on the workers?
 - What attempts have been made to resolve the issue directly with factory management and/or through national legal channels?
4. Ask the brand to **respond by a certain date**. Be sure to give them enough time to receive your letter and look into the allegations outlined in your letter (2 weeks or more). If the brand has not responded by that date, you can send a follow-up note to ensure they received the letter, letting them know that if you don't receive a response by a specific date you will pursue the complaint publicly.
5. **If possible, send an English version of your letter as well**. Seek support from ally organizations that can help you provide a concise English translation. The brand representative may speak Spanish or may be able to find someone to translate the letter, but if you can send the letter in both languages you will increase the chances of receiving a quick response and having your concern reviewed by more senior company representatives. Ask someone to proof-read both versions of your letter for spelling and other errors.
6. Write one letter to **all of the brands** that have a presence at the factory or address your letter to the primary buyer in the factory with copies (cc's) to the others. Brand representatives like to know that they are being asked to share the responsibility of addressing violations with other brands. If you send one letter and copy all of the brands they will know that they are not

- What actions do you want the brand to take?

BRANDS AND LABOUR RIGHTS

How and when to engage with brands?

alone and can work with other brands to address the issue. This also adds to the pressure each individual brand feels to take some action.

7. Consider the possibility of **copying other stakeholders** when writing to the brands. The brands may respond more quickly if they see that international labour organizations have been copied on the letter. This also keeps ally organizations informed about what you are doing and demanding in case you need to call on them for support later on in the process.
8. **Be courteous and professional.** This is a first contact with the brand on the case. They may not have heard anything about the violation previously, and if the first thing that they receive is an attack, they may be less inclined to respond. If the brand feels it is being given the opportunity to respond and address the violation, its representatives may be more open to working quickly to find a solution.