More Issues Reported, Safety in Depth, Access Increases Slightly

Highlights in January include receipt of 210 substantive issues from workers at Alliance factories, the highest number per month to date (see This Month’s Findings, page 2). The number of workers with access to the Helpline rose slightly as well in January to 537,214 in 287 factories.

To better understand the context for the safety issues received by the Helpline, A Closer Look (see page 3) is dedicated to an examination of the 53 safety issues received in January. Three specific safety issues are described in AMADER KOTHA: Safety Reports from the Field (see sidebar). We hope this aggregated data and the specific examples will provide useful insight into the challenges of creating a culture of safety and the role that the Helpline, the Alliance, factories and member companies can play.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES REPORTED TO HELPLINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUN</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUL</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG</td>
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<td>SEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Only issues that occurred in Alliance factories are shown.

AMADER KOTHA: Safety Reports from the Field

The Amader Kotha Helpline received information about important safety issues in January. Three examples help explain the role of the Helpline and the Alliance’s efforts to address workers’ concerns.

DANGEROUS ELECTRICAL PANEL

In one factory, a worker called to report that an electrical panel was uncovered. The worker, who observed loose wires as well, was concerned that a spark could ignite a fire at any time. The worker had informed management before calling the Helpline but no action had been taken.

After Helpline Representatives informed Alliance staff, factory management was immediately notified. Still no action was taken to address the report of the hazard. After another call to the factory—this time with a request that the electrical panel be fixed within the day—the electrical panel was fully repaired. The Helpline was able to inform the worker that the problem had been resolved.

SMOKING IN UNSAFE AREA

In a second factory, a security guard reported to Amader...
KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- More than 50 safety-related issues were reported to Amader Kotha this month; bringing the total number of safety issues received by the Helpline to 169. Reports of active fires in workers’ communities were the most common safety issue shared with Amader Kotha. Please see the following page for more details.

- 2,184 calls were placed to Amader Kotha in January for a total of 10,571 calls received to date.

- 210 substantive issues from workers at Alliance factories were captured by the Helpline this month, the highest number per month to-date. 41 of the issues were deemed "urgent" and reported to the Alliance in real-time.

- The Helpline team completed its reporting protocols for 97% of the substantive issues received in January. Depending on the issue, Helpline representatives and/or the Alliance staff follow-up with involved parties - including workers, factory managers, HR, public services and others - on all pending issues, through to process resolution.

- Fewer workers placed test ("no-category") calls this month as familiarity with Amader Kotha increased and Helpline training wrapped up at participating factories.

- Many workers who reported a substantive issue in January were callers who had previously used the Helpline; these “repeat users” demonstrate some degree of trust and/or satisfaction with Amader Kotha services.

- Similar to previous months, Helpline use was highest among 19 to 29 year olds this month, though workers from across age and tenure groups engaged with the Helpline.

NOTE: Detailed call data is provided to the Alliance for distribution to Alliance member companies after factories have had the opportunity to verify and respond to information provided by workers.

Please see the adjacent visualizations for further information on Helpline usage.
Amader Kotha’s primary mandate is to provide a channel that workers in Bangladesh can use to report safety-related issues via their or a friend’s mobile phone. In January, 53 such issues were reported to the Helpline. Key findings include:

Most safety-related calls received in January related to active fires within workers’ communities. This has been a common use of the Helpline in previous months, as well. Workers tend to call the Helpline—as opposed to the fire department—because many carry Amader Kotha cards on their person at all times. This makes the Helpline easily accessible to workers during emergencies, no matter where they are located. In all cases, Amader Kotha Representatives notify emergency responders.

Two workers reported active fires at their factories this month. The first incident was caused by an electrical spark in the factory’s generator room, which was quickly resolved by factory management after being contacted by the Helpline. The other was a larger fire that spread to multiple factory units; the Helpline remained in contact with the original caller and the fire department until the fire was controlled (about five hours later).

Several callers also shared concerns about issues that either could have caused a fire or led to loss of life in an active fire. These include reports of blocked factory egress routes, loose electrical wires and workers smoking cigarettes close to flammable materials. For all of these issues, the factory acted and their actions were verified by callers.

Workers tend to contact the Helpline first when reporting a safety issue, before using any internal factory grievance mechanisms. This is true both for safety issues inside and outside the factory.

### Safety-Related Calls to the Helpline

**JANUARY 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Active fire outside factory</th>
<th>Active factory fire</th>
<th>Unauthorized Subcontracting</th>
<th>Sparking/Short Circuit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire danger outside factory</td>
<td>Fire danger in factory</td>
<td>Locked exit or blocked egress route</td>
<td>Inadequate facilities/hygiene</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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that workers and management were smoking near a factory building. The caller was concerned about the risk to the building since flammable materials were stored inside. The administration had been informed but no action had been taken. Apparently, a designated smoking area had recently been eliminated due to construction in the area.

After informing the Alliance, factory management was contacted. They committed to posting a ‘no smoking’ sign and to stationing a security guard in the area to make sure the smoking ban was enforced. Shortly thereafter, a ‘no smoking’ sign was posted but still no security personnel were deployed to enforce the regulation. After a second call from the Alliance staff, a security guard was posted and the risky smoking ceased. With the case now closed, Amader Kotha Representatives informed the worker of the actions that had been taken.

**FALSE ALARM SETS OFF PANIC**

In yet another factory, Amader Kotha received a call from a worker about a fire in the generator room. A caller reported that security guards had closed the door to block workers’ exit. Workers had begun to panic.

To understand the problem, Alliance staff immediately contacted two workers who could validate that a fire had broken out in the generator room and was under control. Then, senior Alliance staff went to the factory to investigate further. What they found was that the initial incident was indeed true—there had been a fire that was likely caused by sparks from the generator. The fire was reported, workers exited the building and the flames were contained. What
WHO ARE WE?

Amader Kotha, or “Our Voice” in Bangla, is a unique collaboration among three project partners—Clear Voice, a project of The Cahn Group that operates hotlines and builds effective grievance mechanisms in supply chains; Phulki, a respected civil society organization working to improve the lives of workers and their families in Bangladesh; and Good World Solutions (GWS), a non-profit organization whose flagship tool—Labor Link—has reached over 200,000 workers. Each partner brings years of experience building innovative, best-in-class labor compliance programs in supply chains.

continued from page 3

was also true was that after the fire was contained, a false alarm was sounded. Security guards who had acted appropriately in response to the fire to help get workers to safety, then attempted to prevent workers from leaving after the false alarm. A panic ensued. In this unfortunate case, 17 workers suffered injuries that required hospitalization from pushing and shoving. Following the incident, the factory reported that they delivered a refresher fire safety training for all security guards to remind them of the importance of evacuating safely anytime an alarm sounds, and of their role in protecting life during such emergencies.

Calls to Amader Kotha Helpline, like these real case examples in January, are part of the process of establishing a culture of safety and can lead to valuable lessons for factory managers and Alliance member companies alike.

Information about Amader Kotha is publicized in factories