



Bags of Ethics™ Standard Policy

These standards apply as of 30th April 2016

1.0 Introduction

The Bags of Ethics™ mark was developed as a standard to guarantee that environmentally friendly bags are manufactured in a sustainable and ethical way.

The aim of the Bags of Ethics™ standard is to ensure

- Bags with environmental benefits
- Bags are made in an ethical factory
- Bags are made in an environmentally friendly factory

We have incorporated into these standards the relevant parts of the International Labour Organization Conventions.

2.0 Certification Standards

- 2.1 Bags with environmental benefits – reuse and recycle
- 2.2 Bags with environmental benefits – organic
- 2.3 Bags made in an environmentally friendly factory
- 2.4 Bags made in an ethical factory

The Bags of Ethics™ standards apply only to factories where bags are manufactured (*cut, stitched, printed and packed*). If you wish to manufacture a product as a Bag of Ethics™:-

2.1 Reuse and recycle

The factory must manufacture bags with environmental benefits made of natural biodegradable fibres suitable for re-use and/or recycling.

2.2 Organic

The factory within its range must offer organic fibres/yarns which are independently verified, accredited and audited by bodies such as Control Union Group, which operate under the single global organic textile standard (GOTS)

2.3 Sustainable

The factory must identify ways to reduce CO2 emissions and is encouraged to use carbon offsets to balance all remaining emissions. The inks used for printing must comply with REACH standards.

2.4 Ethical

Employment conditions for all your employees must comply with national requirements as a minimum or the standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO) if these are higher.

You will need to demonstrate that you are aware of national employment legislation or the ILO standards and provide evidence to show compliance.

The factory must be ethically audited with particular reference to:-

- *Freedom of association and collective bargaining with employees having the right to join a union*
- *Employment is freely chosen*
- *A safe and hygienic working environment*
- *All employees over 18 years of age*
- *Living wages paid*
- *No discrimination*



2.4.1 – No Discrimination

You must not discriminate on the basis of:-

- Age
- Race or caste
- Gender or sexual orientation
- Religion or political views
- Nationality

Workers must have equal access to promotion and training.

There must be a disciplinary procedure including an appeal process

2.4.2 – No Exploitation

- All workers must be present in factory voluntarily.
- Use of prison labour is not allowed and employee movement after working hours must not be restricted
- Workers must be free to leave their employment after reasonable notice
- Factory must comply with national legislation relating to termination of employment contracts.
- Normal hours of work not to exceed 48 hours per week or 8 hours per day
- Workers to get at least 30min break for lunch
- Workers to get all national and local government public holidays and at least one paid holiday for every 20 days worked that year
- No mental or physical abuse

2.4.3 – Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

Trade unions play an important role in representing the combined interests of employees.

- All workers must be allowed to bargain collectively
- All workers are free to associate
- Where no unions are present the factory should set-up committees to allow proper dialogue between employer and employees in the fields of health & safety, food facilities, grievance and disciplinary practices and training.

2.4.4 – Safe & Hygienic Working Environment

- The factory must appoint a manager in charge of health & safety who is aware of legislation relevant to the country in which they operate
- There must be first aid support on site
- You must provide rest areas for employees
- You must keep a record of all accidents and treatments administered for a five year period
- You must have a fire evacuation plan communicated to all workers. Fire exits must be available on all floors, they must be well lit and unlocked leading to a place of safety
- You must have a fire alarm system which is regularly tested
- You must have firefighting equipment which is regularly serviced to comply with manufacturer recommendations.
- There must be material safety data sheets for all chemicals
- You must take adequate steps to prevent accidents and injuries by minimizing hazards in the working environment
- Safety notices must be readily visible and written in the local language(s)
- Protective clothing and training must be given to workers handling hazardous chemicals
- Electrical installation and fuses must be checked as per local legislation
- Workplace must be well lit and heated/cooled.
- Toilet and washing facilities must be provided with documented cleaning schedules



2.4.5 – No Child Labour

- You must only employ workers over 18 years of age. The employees' age must be verified upon employment

2.4.6 - Terms and Conditions of Employment

- The lowest hourly wage paid must exceed the minimum hourly wage required by local law
- Men and women must receive equal pay for equivalent work
- All workers must get a pay statement including hours worked and details of all deductions
- You must provide written terms and conditions of employment to both permanent and temporary employees and these must specify:-

Wages, method and time of payment

Job Description

Hours of work and overtime

Holiday pay

Sick Pay

Other benefits such as pensions, maternity and paternity leave