



Apple Supplier Factory Poisons Workers

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In October 2010, China Labor Watch conducted an investigation of the Apple supplier Lianjian (Suzhou) Technologies, a subsidiary of Wintek, which has recently received international press because of the reported 137 worker victims exposed to the toxic gas, n-hexane.

CLW's October 2010 investigation findings of Wintek corroborate what was reported by Apple in its 2011 [Supplier Responsibility Progress Report](#), and subsequently reported by international media outlets such as [Reuters](#), [The New York Times](#), [The Independent](#), and many others.

Apple's findings and the results of our investigation are representative of the situation in many electronics supplier factories throughout China. While Apple is now the target of criticism, its disclosed abuses are not unique. In fact, according to China Labor Watch's recent industry-wide investigations, Apple outperforms all other electronics industry brands in terms of improvement of labor violations and overall supplier factory labor conditions. In many other supplier factories of global electronic brands, labor abuses continue, unreported and unresolved. The most concerning violations include endangerment of worker health and safety, such as excessive work intensity and exposure to toxic substances, underage workers, and involuntary and extremely excessive overtime.

While Apple has made progress in its reporting of labor violations, its response to this situation has been slow. Additionally, while Apple has now demonstrated a willingness to report these "core violations," the ubiquity of unsafe working conditions throughout electronics supplier factories indicates that the true challenge Apple and other global brands must undertake is to resolve systemic supply chain issues. Brand companies' intensified and diligent monitoring of factories is required, as well as building long-term cooperative relationships with factories to improve internal management.

Through the course of the October 2010 investigation at Lianjian (Suzhou) Technologies, we learned that:

- Because of exposure to high concentrations of n-hexane, over 40 workers in the production department became ill, and were taken to the clinic and Suzhou Hospital for treatment.
- Many workers had to return to work, yet extreme cases still received treatment in the hospital. The factory covered the costs for treatment, and paid workers base minimum hourly wage during the treatment period.
- In the production department, each production line has 43 people, each day workers sit and continuously work for approximately 4 hours before resting.
- Workers have one hour to eat lunch and dinner, however this is not enough time, especially at lunch. There are many workers, and workers still must strip off their dust-proof uniforms, and line up in the cafeteria. There is typically only 40 minutes for lunch, after workers finish eating there is no time for any other rest.
- In January 2010, there was a strike in the factory of approximately 2,000 people. Workers protested and conducted a strike because of dissatisfaction that the company cancelled the 2009 year-end rewards.
- When workers first enter the factory, their salary is \$164/month, and after the end of the probation period, and after passing an examination, wages rise to \$188 /month. After completing one year of work, they require nine months of wage raise to \$204/month.
- The entire factory implements an hourly wage system. Overtime wages are in accordance with national labor standards.
- The factory does not have an environmental health and safety committee

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