



Hasbro, Mattel Toy Suppliers Slammed In Labor Report

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China Labor Watch released results of undercover investigation.

Laborers at some toy factories in China work without adequate protection, toiling long hours with few, if any, breaks. Many facilities lack proper fire safety measures and subject workers to poor living conditions. For some, quitting means giving up earned wages. According to a [new report by China Labor Watch](#), which investigated five major factories that supply toys to Hasbro and Mattel, labor violations are rampant in Chinese toy factories.

China Labor Watch sent undercover investigators to the factories, which altogether employ about 20,000 laborers. "Over the past 20 years, toy brands and retailers have reaped tremendous benefits from the labor and sometimes even the lives of Chinese workers," China Labor Watch Program Coordinator Kevin Slaten said in a press release, "yet these companies fail to respect labor rights and to ensure that workers also enjoy the fruits of the toy industry's success."

The report found instances of hiring discrimination, mandatory and excessive overtime work, unpaid work, broken labor contracts, poor safety measures and few paths for laborers to seek recourse. Many of these issues also break Chinese labor law.

Hasbro and Mattel have both responded by launching investigations into the claims made in the report. In a statement to *Fortune*, Hasbro spokeswoman Julie Duffy said, "We are aware of the China Labor Watch report and take their allegations very seriously. We require all Hasbro products to be manufactured in accordance with rigorous ethical standards, and that all third party facilities ensure employees have a healthy and safe working environment. Hasbro combines industry best practices, strategic partnerships, and strict auditing standards to respect the safety, well-being, and dignity of workers, and works continuously to ensure compliance with all third party facilities."

Mattel spokesperson Alex Clark said that the company is in the process of reviewing the report. "In the meantime, I can tell you Mattel is committed to ensuring every single person making our toys and products is treated fairly, with respect and is able to work in a safe and healthy environment. Our labor standards, environmental, health and safety programs and oversight processes reflect this commitment, and we stand behind our record of ethical labor practices and environmental stewardship. We are devoted to ensuring that our manufacturing facilities throughout the world are safe and ethical places to work, and we reject any suggestion to the contrary."

This report is not the non-profit organization's first time criticizing Hasbro and Mattel. Last year, in response to a critical report by the organization, Mattel [released a statement](#) in December 2014 calling China Labor Watch's claims "incomplete, at best, or false." The eight-page statement took issue with the undercover instigators' lack of perspective, saying they were not professional auditors, and it responded point-by-point to criticism. It also noted, "Mattel was one of the first toy companies manufacturing in China to establish a Code of Conduct in 1997 supported by independent inspections of manufacturing facilities, the results of which the company published."

Chinese factory workers' poor labor conditions have received international scrutiny since a [string of suicides](#) in 2010 at a Foxconn Technology Group factory. But according to China Labor Watch's new report, there has been little impact on the factories it surveyed: many problems have endured or even worsened. The Foshan Nanhai Mattel Diecast Company, for example, stopped its hiring discrimination practices since a China Labor Watch report in 2012. Now, the company actively recruits disabled workers. But the factory has taken a step back in other regards. The 2015 report found a new labor violation, in which laborers are forced to accept any future overtime arrangement upon being hired.

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