The Lear Corporation is one of the largest suppliers for the global automotive industry, making products in five major interior systems: seat; instrument panel/cockpit, door and trim, overhead and flooring and acoustics. Lear is also in the electronics and electrical distribution systems business. The company employs 115,000 employees in 34 countries, and it is headquartered in Southfield, Michigan. Its major clients are GM and Ford.

In Mexico, Lear manages three different business divisions: the Interior Systems Division, which makes overheads, visors and door panels; the Seating Systems Division, which makes the stitching, upholstery and the rail system for the seats; and the Electronics Systems Division, which manufactures harnesses for car interiors.

Lear has approximately 45 plants in Mexico, the majority of them maquiladoras. At the beginning of 2006, the company employed 40,000 employees in 13 cities of 9 states of the country:

- Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez, in Chihuahua.
- Ramos Arizpe, Arteaga, Saltillo and Piedras Negras, in Coahuila.
- Hermosillo, in Sonora.
- Puebla, in Puebla.
- Santa Catarina, in Nuevo León.
- Silao, in Guanajuato.
- Tlahuac, in the Federal District.
- Toluca and Cuautitlán, in the State of México.

The large majority of the Lear maquiladoras are located in Ciudad Juárez (19 plants) and the city of Chihuahua (14).

In the United States and Canada, Lear employed 29,000 people by the end of 2005; however, in April of the same year, Lear announced the closure of 10 plants in the United States during 2006 and 2007. These are in addition to the closings of 7 plants in 2005.

Lear and its workers

It is for nothing that protests in Lear factories have occurred in different cities. For example, on May 5th 2006 close to 200 Lear workers in Saltillo stopped production for an entire morning in response to a company announcement that it would not be giving the workers their share of profits. Even the CTM union in the plant called for a strike. A few days later, Lear decided it would give 1,800 employees a profit-sharing bonus and 10 days of pay. Apparently each worker received $700 pesos ($65 US).

Previously, in the year 2002, close to 100 Lear workers in Ciudad Juárez went to its Labor Relations Board (Junta de Conciliación y Arbitraje) to protest. They demanded that the Junta show them the collective bargaining agreement that Lear had with the CTM union, in order to verify the facts of the said contract.

On November 10th, 2005 Lear's Code of Business Conduct and Ethics went into effect. This code is deficient in its labor protections because it does not mention respect for freedom of association, although it does include a point VII called "Discrimination/Harassment/Anti-Retaliation" (page 6) which states:

"(We) will not tolerate any illegal discrimination or harassment of any kind. An employee who makes a good faith report of discrimination, harassment or other unlawful treatment should not be concerned about action being taken against him or her because of the report. The Company..."
will not tolerate retaliation of any kind against those who make complaints in good faith. Employees can find a copy of Lear's policies concerning discrimination, harassment and anti-retaliation on Lear's Intranet, or obtain a copy from the Company's Corporate Human Resources Department or Legal Department.

Lear has also a one-page document titled: "Lear Corporation's Global Labor Standards". There is not a Spanish-version of this document available on Lear's website.

The company states on it that Lear "is committed to treating all employees with dignity and respect. In each location where Lear conducts business, it complies with laws governing the employment relationship. Additionally, Lear is committed to recognizing the following human rights and labor principles throughout its global organization. Two of those principles mentioned are:

"Forced Labor"

The Company believes that all employees should have the right to voluntarily elect whether to be employed by the Company. The Company will not use forced or involuntary labor of any kind or tolerate physically abusive disciplinary practices."

"Harassment and Discrimination"

The Company is committed to providing all employees with a professional working environment which is free from unlawful forms of discrimination and harassment. The Company strives to make all employment decisions based on the facts and individual merit."

Top