

Redacted Monitoring Status Report

This report has been redacted so that it can be shared publicly without compromising the remediation process or the safety of workers and monitors. Some information has been removed completely.

Date of report:	September 2023
Monitoring:	December 2022 (remote)
Country:	China
Tier and function:	Tier 2, component supplier
Brands/Buyers:	Dell, HP
Products:	HP notebooks and desktops Dell servers, storage and notebooks
Affected affiliates:	48 organisations located in 8 countries
Status:	✓ Findings Available
Update:	Risks identified through remote monitoring are outside the scope of the Terms of Engagement with the RBA.
Recommended engagement:	We recommend that affiliates who have not already done so engage their contractors directly to better understand identified risks and how they are being mitigated

Issues at a Glance

There are risks of violations of standard regulating the following issues:

- Child Labour
- Discrimination in Employment and Occupation**
- Environmental Issues
- Fair Recruitment**
- Freedom of Employment
- Freedom of Association & the Right to Collective Bargaining
- Occupational Health and Safety**
- Termination of Employment
- Violence-Free Work Environment
- Wages and Benefits
- Working Hours

Background

An Electronics Watch monitoring partner conducted remote monitoring, reviewing 50 online sources dating from 2003 to 2022. These included recruitment notices, court records and employee testimonies referring to this facility.

The evidence is insufficient to confirm violations, but it suggests risks of violations.

Explanations

Occupational health and safety (OHS): Testimonies of serious OHS issues extend long into the supplier's history. Court records from the end of 2020 cite multiple OHS concerns including noise, fumes, and radiation. Records from 2014 refer to the use of the solvent, n-Hexane (CAS #110-54-3), which causes damage to the nervous system. GreenScreen lists N-Hexane as a "Chemical of High Concern" that should be avoided.¹ Recent consultations with a former subject-matter expert from within the company that owns this facility suggest that it is reasonable to believe that this chemical is still being used.

Age discrimination: Discrimination is visible in hiring announcements that request that applicants are women are under 45 years old.

Excessive use of outside recruiters: Both older and more recent records suggest excessive use of outside and illicit (unregistered) recruiters. As early as 2011 and as late as 2022, records refer to both this company and a diminutive of it, which is used to refer to a recruitment service. According to Chinese law, no more than 10% of employees may be hired through outside recruiters. Because workers are hired by recruiters on short-term contracts, they are often not afforded the same training opportunities as regular employees. This is one reason why contract workers are more frequently victims of work accidents. In this sense, the excessive use of outside recruiters is linked to an increased risk of health and safety hazards.

¹ <https://www.greenscreenchemicals.org/>. N-Hexane is also one of 12 chemicals in Electronics Watch's list of chemicals of concern, and one of nine in a similar list developed by the Clean Electronics Production Network. See, "How to Protect Workers from Chemical Hazards in Electronics Supply Chains: Guidance for Public Buyers," available at: https://electronicswatch.org/en/procurement-tools-and-studies_2543028.

How to engage

We recommend that affiliates who have not already done so engage their contractors to better understand the identified risks. Specifically, affiliates should ask their contractors for evidence regarding how [redacted] reduces employee exposure to toxic chemicals and radiation.

Sample language:

“Electronics Watch has informed us of a credible risk of serious occupational health and safety issues to both permanent and temporary workers at [redacted]’s facility in [redacted], China. These include the possible use of toxic chemicals, such as the solvent N-Hexane. Please reach out to [redacted], as one of your subcontractors, requesting detailed evidence of how it mitigates risk to workers at that site, such as recent internal or external occupational health and safety and environmental management system audits. This should include a list of chemicals used or stored at the facility and air quality measurement reports.”