

Member Guide: Understanding Modern Slavery Risks

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1. What is Modern Slavery?

Modern slavery is an umbrella term that includes forced labor, human trafficking, bonded labor, and other forms of exploitation where individuals are coerced or controlled for commercial gain. It can occur in any industry, including fashion supply chains.

2. Why It Matters for GFD Members

Even if your business is not involved in manufacturing or international sourcing, your partners, vendors, or subcontractors might be. Ethical sourcing is increasingly expected by customers, regulators, and business partners. Demonstrating responsible practices helps build trust and credibility.

3. Common Risk Factors in Fashion Supply Chains

- Lack of transparency about factories or labor providers.
- Use of third-party recruiters charging fees to workers.
- Extremely low pricing that cannot sustain legal wages.
- High use of migrant labor without safeguards.

4. What GFD Members Can Do

- Ask suppliers about labor conditions and recruitment practices.
- Use due diligence checklists or vetting questions during sourcing.
- Set clear expectations in supplier contracts or onboarding materials.
- Provide education to your team about labor rights and risks.
- Report unethical practices or concerns when encountered.

5. GFD Resources Available

GFD provides optional tools for Members, including:

- Ethical Sourcing Checklist
- Modern Slavery Red Flags Reference Sheet
- Supplier Vetting Questions Template
- Sample Responsible Sourcing Policy