RBC Policy

Kapten & Son

“As an internationally operating brand, Kapten & Son recognises its responsibility to conduct business in an ethical and sustainable manner. Therefore, we are committing ourselves to continuously work towards bettering the way we do business, and to bring people and the environment in line with our actions.”

Dear Kaptens,

we are amid a big transformation within the textile industry, and that makes a shift in business a necessity. As an internationally growing company, we want to make sure that we are dedicated to actively shape these shifts and to become the most ethical und sustainable version of ourselves.

With joining FAIR WEAR Foundation in 2022, we have set ourselves the goal to recognise human rights and fair labour conditions, preventing any human rights violations and fostering fair working conditions throughout our whole supply chain, including our own operations and the ones of partners and other stakeholders. The goal is clear: we only want to sell products that are produced under strict ethical standards. Drawing from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Standards, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Organisations as well as the 10 Guiding Principles of the UN Global Compact, we have set out the following guidelines that we expect our employees, as well as business partners to respect and support.

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Our RBC policy forms only a basis of our commitment to human rights and ethical labour practices. Even more important will be the actions and processes we establish to protect and foster human rights and fair working conditions.

We have established a Suppliers Code of Conduct that our business partners are expected to sign and comply with. We see it as our obligation to work together with our business partners on corrective actions and remediation measures, if any form of code violations is experienced.

While we are going to establish purchasing practices that foster stable orders, realistic forecasts and lead times, to prevent possible breaches even before they arise, we are also promoting a social dialogue with our business partners to understand their needs and provide financial and non-financial resources, wherever possible.

Moreover, we are going to establish a Human Rights Due Diligence assessment that investigates possible human right risks on part of our operations. Based on this assessment, we will formulate a Sourcing Policy that sets out how we internally source products and evaluate potential and existing suppliers regarding human rights standards. Special attention will be paid to possible gender inequalities, which form a high risk in the textile supply chains with the help of gender mapping and FAIR WEAR's gender toolkit.

We see a great opportunity in being a part of FAIR WEAR's network of member brands, in that they have more leverage and power in the industry as we do alone. Therefore, we are willing to cooperate with other FAIR WEAR member brands (and also non FAIR WEAR member brands) in risk identification, mitigation, remediation and prevention, wherever possible.

Lastly, we recognise the necessity to provide social dialogue between management and employees on the side of the suppliers. While worker's voices are an essential component of understanding and improving working conditions, we currently face the challenge of legislative restrictions in freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining in several production countries. Supporting the implementation of factory level grievance mechanisms and searching for ways to increase the collaboration between management and employees will be one of the main focal points in our advancement of work force engagement in our supply chain.

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This RBC policy is approved and supported by executive members of Kapten & Son. It provides a framework for developing a sourcing strategy and sourcing practices and gives implications for future decisions and business practices.

Social standards

The respect of human rights is an integral part of responsible business conduct for Kapten & Son. As a member of FAIR WEAR Foundation, we have dedicated ourselves to comply to FAIR WEAR Code of Labour Practices (CoLP), the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Organisations, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Standards as well as the 10 UN Guiding Principles of the UN Global Compact. In this manner, we refuse to engage in all exploitative labour conditions. Apart from our own dedication, we also ask all business partners, employees, and other stakeholders to adhere to the following principles.

1. No exploitation of child labour

We at Kapten & Son have a zero tolerance to any form of child labour. All employees must be at least 15 years old or over the age required for completion of compulsory education in the country of operation, whichever is higher (ILO Convention 138). "There shall be no forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour. [...] Children [between the age of 15-18] shall not perform work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm their health, safety, or morals" (ILO Convention 182). All labour practices of Kapten & Son are to be aligned to the aforementioned ILO Conventions.

2. Employment is freely chosen

There shall be no use of forced labour, including indentured, slave, bonded or prison labour (ILO Conventions 29 and 105). Acts of human trafficking are forbidden, and all stakeholders are obliged to respect the right of their employees to leave the employer after adequate notice. All labour practices of Kapten & Son are to be aligned with the aforementioned ILO Conventions.

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3. No discrimination in employment

At Kapten & Son we are obliged to provide equal opportunity in all matters. Recruitment, wage policy, admittance to training programs, employee promotion policy, policies of employment termination, retirement, and any other aspect of the employment relationship shall be based on the principle of equal opportunities, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, nationality, social origin, deficiencies, or handicaps. Furthermore, all employees shall be treated with respect and no physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal abuse as well as no embarrassing acts shall be exerted as disciplinary measures.

At Kapten & Son, diversity and inclusion are of utmost importance in our company. Along with our internal diversity team, we are continuously reshaping and rethinking current and future business practices.

4. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining

At Kapten & Son we acknowledge our employees' freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The right of all employees to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively is recognised (ILO Conventions 87 and 98). All suppliers shall facilitate independent and free association and bargaining of all workers in accordance with the national law. Employees' representatives shall not be the subject of discrimination and shall have access to all workplaces necessary to carry out their representation functions (ILO Convention 135 and Recommendation 143).

We understand that freedom of association is an enabling right, which gives workers the possibility to speak up and discuss other human rights violations. We therefore work towards giving freedom of association a more important role in our sourcing strategy and consequently in the selection of future production locations.

We require our current suppliers to grant their employees adequate access to grievance mechanisms. In order to demonstrate our own responsibility in this matter, we will start mapping the social dialogue in our production countries and at the supplier level as well as provide support, wherever possible.

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We also want to provide grievance procedures for our own employees, which ideally resolves arising failings and complaints and ensures respectful communication between employees and management at Kapten & Son.

It is our goal to involve, inform and include all our employees into relevant business processes. In doing so, we are committed to finding the right balance between economic interests and the interests of Kapten & Son's employees. The conduct and level of communication towards and among employees is characterised by respect and fairness and sets out in an internal Code of Conduct. In the occurrence of a conflict, our goal remains to provide a constructive and respectful cooperation between the parties involved.

5. Payment of a living wage

At Kapten & Son, wages and benefits paid for a standard working week shall meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and always be sufficient to meet basic needs of employees and their families as well as provide some discretionary income (ILO Conventions 26 and 131). Deductions from wages for disciplinary measures shall not be permitted, nor shall any deductions from wages not provided for by national law be permitted. Deductions shall never constitute an amount that will lead the employee to receive less than the minimum wage. Employees shall be adequately and clearly informed about the specifications of their wages including wage rates and pay period. Moreover, wages as well as any other allowances or benefits shall be paid timely and in the preferred manner of the employee.

With our commitment to the Code of Labour Practices and the ILO conventions, we recognise the shared responsibility of also attaining fair payment terms on the supplier's side. Consequently, we have set ourselves the goal to work towards gaining a clear understanding of the labour cost component of our purchasing prices.

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6. No excessive working hours

Hours of work shall comply with applicable laws and industry standards. In any event, workers shall not on a regular basis be required to work more than 48 hours per week. All stakeholders are demanded to allow employees at least 24 consecutive hours of rest in every seven-day period. All overtime work shall be consensual.
Overtime shall be voluntary, shall not exceed 12 hours per week, shall not be demanded on a regular basis and shall always be compensated at a premium rate (ILO Convention 1).

At Kapten & Son we respect national legal requirements of working times and make sure that our employees comply with work breaks, resting times and frequent paid vacation leave.
As for our business partners, we make sure that planning and forecasting of production are timed realistically, and allow appropriate working hours for employees in our partner factories. In the event of unforeseen changes, we work together with our business partners on solutions in a way that appropriate working hours can still be guaranteed.

7. Safe and healthy working conditions

Employee safety is one of our top priorities. Therefore, we and our business partners commit to providing a safe and healthy work environment, according not less than the applicable law, to prevent accidents and injuries to health arising from or linked with the performed work. Best occupational health and safety practice shall be promoted, bearing in mind the prevailing knowledge of the industry and of any specific hazards. Appropriate attention shall be paid to occupational hazards specific to this branch of the industry, and assure that a safe and hygienic work environment is provided. Effective regulations shall be implemented to prevent accidents and minimise health risks as much as possible (ILO Convention 155). Physical abuse, threats of physical abuse, unusual punishments or discipline, sexual and other harassment, and intimidation by the employer is strictly prohibited.

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8. Legally binding employment relationship

There must be a legally binding employment contract. Every worker should get a written contract and all legal social security charges should be paid as stated in the contract. Obligations to employees under labour or social security laws and regulations arising from the regular employment relationship shall not be avoided using labour-only contracting arrangements or through apprenticeship schemes where there is no real intent to impart skills or provide regular employment. Younger workers shall be given the opportunity to participate in education and training programs.

To make sure that all business partners of Kapten & Son respect and adhere to a legally binding employment relationship, agreements with business partners and suppliers will require that all workers receive written contracts as set out above.

Environmental standards

To mitigate environmental damage, we have set out the following principles, that we wish to respect and incorporate in all our business practices. While we already try to use sustainable and recycled materials for our production, whenever possible, we know that there is still a lot of room for improvement in terms of sustainability in our supply chain as well as in our product development. Consequently, these principles shall be seen as a first step towards more sustainable business practices, but they will be expanded and refined in the future, as our understanding regarding the best sustainability practices develops.

1. EU Reach Standard compliance

We are complying with the European legislation and regulations of chemicals in terms of product materials set out in the EU Reach Standard. To ensure that no chemicals or other substances are used in the manufacturing of our products, all our business partners have been made aware and signed the respective Restricted Substances List.

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2. Decent waste management

We want to commit to a decent waste management in our supply chain. Therefore, we currently monitor the waste management at our business partners' factories, and want to work together on solutions to improve waste management. All different kinds of waste (solid, hazardous, domestic wastewater and gas) shall be controlled and managed accordingly. Moreover, recyclable and non-recyclable waste is to be disposed of separately.

As for Kapten & Son products and packaging, we work on and follow the principle of reducing materials to additionally reduce accruing waste. Moreover, we also want to reduce the number of used materials in our products and packaging to simplify waste disposal for our customers.

3. Decent air emissions

Additionally to decent waste management, we also want to commit to reducing air emissions. Along with our waste management, we also monitor air emissions at the factories of our business partners and want to work on solutions to reduce air emissions. We ask our business partners to classify, routinely monitor and treat general emissions from operating procedure (air and noise emissions) and greenhouse gas emissions as needed, before they are released. Moreover, it is also the business partners responsibility to monitor their emissions treatment systems.

4. Animal welfare

No living creature should be harmed or slaughtered solely for the purpose of fashion, which is why we have set ourselves the goal to offer a completely vegan product portfolio by the end of 2023. While, since August 2022, our production does not use any animal materials, we will sell off stocks from watches and watch straps with leather components until the end of 2023.

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Governing standards

As we grow as a brand internally and expand our business operations in other markets, we want to professionalise our governance approach and set out policies in terms of privacy, anti-corruption, and fair competition, in which our employees and other stakeholders adhere to.

1. Privacy

At Kapten & Son we respect data privacy as a personal right. Personal data is only used and processed to the extent that is permitted by laws (GDPR), regulations and those affected. Our privacy statement, which can be found on our website, forms the basis of a responsible, legally compliant and ethic use of all data and information. Therefore, all employees and other stakeholders are obliged to care for confidential and proprietary information of others as well as personal information from illegal access, destruction, use, modification, and disclosure. Appropriate physical and electronic security shall always be incorporated. Only a limited number of authorised employees shall have access to personal data.

2. Anti-Corruption

We take a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and are dedicated to acting fairly and with integrity in all our business dealings and operations. Participating in or benefitting from any kind of corruption, extortion or bribery shall be avoided by all our employees and business partners. Gaining any improper business advantage by offering, promising, giving or authorising anything of specific value to any person or business partner in any country is, therefore, also prohibited. Soliciting, receiving, or accepting any form of bribe from another person shall always be prevented by all our employees and business partners.

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5. Fair Competition

Norms of fair business practices, fair advertising and fair competition are to be observed. Beyond this, the relevant antitrust laws, which particularly prohibit agreements and other activities to influence prices or conditions, are to be applied. These rules further prohibit agreements between business partners or other stakeholders, that are intended to limit customers' freedom to autonomously determine the prices and conditions for their resale of goods.

6. Subcontracting

Kapten & Son is committed to terminate any form of subcontracting without prior information. This obligation will be incorporated into contracts between Kapten & Son and its suppliers. Moreover, direct suppliers will be required to continuously monitor approved subcontractors and sub-suppliers for social and environmental responsibility using standards that meet or exceed our social standards. The supplier is obliged to extend any agreements with suppliers accordingly.

7. Traceability and Monitoring

Transparency and traceability will play a key role in supply chain management and business operations in the upcoming years. Therefore, we require our employees and business partners to work towards high traceability and transparency through the whole supply chain.

To guarantee compliance of our principles on human rights and ethical labour practices, we reserve the right to assess labour conditions at our business partner's factories in the form of announced and unannounced audits with third party auditors. If the assessment shows, that the Suppliers Code of Conduct is breached, we and the business partner will engage in defining a Corrective Action Plan and improving conditions in a sufficient amount of time.

We also commit ourselves to higher transparency and traceability towards our customers, which is why we are going to publish social reports of our FAIR WEAR Brand Performance Check and sustainability information at the end of each fiscal year. Moreover, we are working on detailed traceability of the manufacturing of each product, which we aim to provide to our customers in the upcoming years.

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Liability and Observance

This RBC policy statement was jointly approved by management, the HR and CSR department. It is applicable for all employees of Kapten & Son, and is expected to be upheld by every employee in all business practices. In case of requests, suggestions, or individual concerns, we encourage you to contact the HR department.

We require our direct business partners to uphold our standards on human rights, the environment, and governance as well and to convey them to their employees and business partners. We will support our business partners in implementing the requirements through cooperation, training, and resources, wherever possible. If we witness any code violations on business partner's side, they will be contacted to discuss Corrective Action Plans. In case of severe violations, such as a business partner's involvement in child labour, forced labour, physical abuse or corruption, corrective actions will be put in place immediately as well as possible remediation actions.

If severe and repeated code violations as well as refusal to commit to Corrective Action Plans are witnessed, Kapten & Son has the right to terminate the business or employment relationship immediately.



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