

APPAREL NEST QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINE

APPAREL NEST is committed with all our customers to supply highest standards of quality, on time delivery and safety. Our QA team works closely with production and sourcing teams, and each vendor and manufacturing partners to bring this commitment to life.

The Apparel Nest Quality Assurance guideline is intended to be used as a general guide by our overseas QA personnel and outlines the important procedures, processes, and documentation to be utilized in order to monitor and verify quality levels prior to shipping. Specific customer requirements that may differ from the information contained in this guideline takes precedence. The QA team is expected to have working knowledge of the latest customer requirements for appropriate application.

This guideline also highlights key points of compliance and safety standards and regulatory requirements that may be applicable to certain product categories.

As always, we thank each and every one of our QA team for their hard work and dedication to our commitment to Quality and Safety.

QA Team Functions

The QA team serves as partners to vendors and factories to help evaluate their production capabilities as well as monitor quality, offer training and consulting services, and communicate with the Apparel Nest USA Office for on-time delivery of quality, safe products.

To that end, the QA team executes a number of responsibilities. The below outlines the primary roles and responsibilities:

- Factory Evaluation
- All sample evaluation, Proto, Fit, PP, TOP, Salesman, Shipments samples
- Bulk fabric quality and weight verification based on approvals
- Trims and accessories inspection
- Capacity and Production Plan Analysis
- Pre-production Meeting
- Pilot run inspection and technical support
- Inline inspection
- Technical support
- Measurement audits
- Pressing and packing goods inspection
- Assortment inspection
- Prefinal inspection
- Final inspection
- Evaluate Best Practices
- Social Compliance checklist
- Update daily production details

Factory Evaluation

Factory Evaluations (FE's) are conducted to assess a factory capabilities and existing quality control systems to determine their ability to meet Customer requirements.

Overview

- All factories producing for Apparel Nest are evaluated by the QA team for consideration.
- Apparel Nest QA team may conduct follow-up evaluation when necessary.
- FE to validate quality and manufacturing processes accordingly to our customer standards.
- Orders cannot be placed until FE's have been reviewed and approved by Apparel Nest USA team.
- Drive continuous improvement through the Corrective Action Plans (CAPs).
- Document capabilities – what type of products are produced?
- Document processes – what is their quality assurance processes and how are they documented?
- Document capacity – how many machines, by type, are available? What is their average output / efficiency?
- Document overall quality – conduct sample inspection and record results.
- It is important to note overall housekeeping and cleanliness of the factory during this time.
- QA inspectors should also note the attitude of the factory's management team toward quality and safety requirements and their willingness to support QA suggestions and recommendations.

Sample evaluation

QA Team has to check all the samples against customer technical details before sending to Apparel Nest USA office.

Be sure to keep one sample for reference.

All samples sent to Apparel Nest USA must be signed by AN QA and factory/agent QC.

All samples sent to Apparel Nest USA must be tagged using Apparel Nest security tags

Bulk Fabric Quality inspection

Random inspection Incoming Bulk fabric and also weight shade checking against final approved swatches which submit by Apparel nest USA.

Trims and accessories inspection

Random inspection Incoming Bulk trims against final approved trim card which submit by Apparel Nest USA.

Capacity and Production Plan Analysis

The Capacity and Production Plan (CPP) is an important tool that is used to determine production progress against a delivery deadline. It can also provide information leading to possible use of unauthorized subcontractors by allowing us to calculate the production total the factory is capable of producing during a certain time period.

Each QA inspector must be able to create and maintain an accurate and updated CPP for each factory and style. The information to be contained in the CPP includes, but is not limited, to the following: QA team must be mindful of changing factory conditions that can impact the CPP including change in the number of lines given for production, increase or decrease in efficiency, availability of raw materials, and holidays and other off days.

Pre-Production Meeting

Pre-production meetings are an opportunity for the factory to review the details of a program to outline a robust and realistic production plan production timeline, and capacity management.

Another objective of the Pre-Production Meeting is to ensure that the Vendor/Factory correctly understands all final order fulfillment details including testing, inspections, and audits, and to ensure any open issues have been resolved prior to moving to bulk production.

The Apparel Nest QA team will assist to conduct the PP meetings to help identify potential quality issue that may occur and develop procedures and take preventative measures.

During the meeting, a review of all approved PP samples must be conducted including the verification of

PP Meeting Requirements

- The meeting must occur 3-10 days prior to the start of production/pilot run.
- The meeting must take conducted at the production factory.
- Correct Pattern used
- Measurements meet specification
- Correct materials and trims are used
- Construction is as required
- Fit and PP approval comments have been followed
- Overall quality of workmanship meets required standards
- Appearance on form is satisfactory
- Confirm production schedule against delivery dates
- Understand customer's testing, inspection, and audit requirements
- All pending issues and questions from the meeting must be resolved before production.
- Bulk production cannot begin without completed PP meeting.
- The meeting must be attended by cross-section of factory management.
- The meeting must be documented with a detailed report.

Pilot run inspection and technical support

When production line start to feeding pilot run, Apparel Nest QA must be present in factory. The purpose of pilot run inspection is to ensure all the measurement are met to final speck prior to start bulk cutting and also adjust the sewing machine based on fabric for bulk production.

Inline / Offline inspection

The purpose of an inline inspection is to ensure that products being produced and shipped from the factory meets customer's specified requirements and standards.

Inspection Objectives as follow.

- Partner with factory and agent to assist in meeting QA requirements.
- Ensure all the measurement are met customer speck.
- Identify and resolve quality issues early in the process.
- Ensure consistency of product quality throughout production process.
- Create a culture of continuous improvement and focus on quality.
- Inspect raw materials and finished products for defects.
- Ensure on-time delivery.
- Ensure final product meets total customer requirements.

Measurement inspection

Measurement inspection has to be conducted every single visit as per Apparel Nest measurement guideline.

Packing Inspection

When factory starts packing, Apparel Nest QA must inspect the goods ready for packing and verify garment appearance, Measurement, hang tag and barcode sticker, folding methods and Packing trims,

Assortment inspection

Assortment inspection has to be conducted every visit to ensure to meet zero tolerance.

Pre-final inspection

Pre-final inspection has to be conducted after 80% packing is completed to ensure all the goods are in acceptable quality standard.

Final inspection

Apparel Nest QA will conduct the final inspection after 100% packing is completed and following steps must be taken by the factory prior to final inspection.

- Inspection must be requested from Apparel Nest regional QAM at least 4 days in advance.
- Garment test report must be available prior to final inspection and result should be pass.
- An inspection may be conducted without passing test reports. However, the final inspection status will be “Hold” pending the submission and review of all passing test reports. This should be clearly noted in the inspection report and Apparel Nest USA office must be notified immediately.
- Apparel Nest QA team will accommodate urgent requests on a case by case basis.
- Full quantity available for inspection must be 100% packed.
- A single inspection must not contain more than 100,000 pcs.

Appearance and Workmanship

- Single Sampling Plan for normal inspection, General Inspection Level II
- Acceptable Quality Level – **AQL 2.5**

Measurement Inspection

- Single Sampling plan for Special Inspection Level 4 (S-4) or 5 pcs per size, covering all the colors.
- Acceptable Quality Level – **AQL 2.5**

Assortment Inspection

- The number of cartons inspection for assortment is 10% and E-com orders must inspect 100%
- Acceptable Quality Level – **Zero Tolerance**

Needle Contamination inspection

- All the garments selected for visual inspection must pass through the metal detector to ensure that garments are not contaminated with needles or needle fragments during production.
- Acceptable Quality Level – **Zero Tolerance**

Final inspection frailer

- Apparel Nest USA office must be notified immediately when an inspection is failed. Apparel Nest USA office must receive the failed inspection report within 48 hours of completion of the inspection.

Apparel Nest QA Best Practices

The Apparel Nest QA team should encourage below best practices when visiting factories to achieve good quality on a consistent basis while promoting an injury-free sustainability workplace.

Reference Samples

A sample that meets buyer's requirements and specifications should be displayed in each production line and display mockup in each machine who are doing critical operation, This helps workers see and understand the correct product size, color, design and quality. Each worker must be able to see the sample. This will reduce the number of mistakes and also ensure consistent quality and construction.

Posters

It is a general good practice to post posters and notices in the factory floor. It is an effective way of communicating or reinforcing a message, educating the workers, and to drive good behavior. Not only do posters promote good practices and quality, safety and sustainability , but they also present a positive image of the workplace.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be provided to workers by the factory as necessary depending on the hazards associated with the work being performed. PPE should always be in good condition and workers trained to use them properly and monitor.

Machine Maintenance

Regular machine maintenance ensures optimum quality and productivity. Also, well maintained machines perform better, are safer, and last longer. All workers should be able to perform basic machine maintenance and the factory should also have experienced mechanics to for more technical maintenance on a regular basis.

Follow up Broken Needle Replacement Policy

Suppliers should replace needles at regular intervals to prevent needle breakage and damage caused by worn needles. The frequency of changing needles depends on the production output and type of fabric being used and needle size and type should always be considered.

Suppliers are required to ensure that garments are not contaminated with needles or needle fragments during production by adhering to Apparel Nest, **Broken Needle Replacement Policy**.

Fabric Laying and Cutting

Each fabric has its own maximum lay depth. QA teams should work closely with the factory identify the correct depth for the fabric being cut and ensure it is understood and followed by all workers in the cutting section. Factory must have evidence of written procedures and existing policies.

Fabric Storage

The quality of a finished garment starts with the quality of the fabric. Fabric should always be kept in good condition in a cool, dry place in an organized manner and kept covered when not in use. They should be clearly marked and easily identifiable by roll, width, batch, style, lot, or color. Fabric should also be stored on a rack or shelf, not on the floor, and lying down, not standing up to prevent stains and other damages.

Good Lighting

Proper lighting conditions are a simple but critical way to improve productivity and quality. Conversely, poor lighting conditions increase the likelihood of making mistakes, cause eye strain, and fatigue. The factory should make full use of natural lighting as much as possible and ensure all workstations are properly illuminated.

Material Handling

A workplace that is organized is more profitable and produces better quality products. Simple practices such as the use of rolling carts or hanging rails can help prevent defects while enhancing efficiency.

Separation of Defective Products

The factory should have a clear and effective system for segregating defective products throughout the production line. They must also have a policy to ensure defective products are not shipped to the customer.

Machine Safety

All machines should be equipped with safety guards to prevent injury including needle and belt guards. The factory should also provide workers with regular training on machine handling and good safety practices.

Storage of Sharp Tools and Equipment

All sharp tools and equipment should be kept in good condition and stored properly to prevent loss and promote safety. Sharp tools such as trimming scissors must always be permanently tied to the workstation.

Carton Storage

Cartons should always be stored in a dry, cool area and be kept off the walls and floor to avoid getting wet. They should not be kept for long periods and not stacked too high as it could cause injuries when tipped over or cause carton damage due to weight.

Social Compliance Checklist

The Health & Safety QA Short Audit Form should be used by all Apparel Nest QA staff to report the presence of critical safety violations at the factory. This must be completed twice a month, or when violations are observed, whichever is more frequent.