

Workers at Apple supplier complain of unsafe conditions

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For the second time in three months, Apple is facing questions about working conditions at its Chinese suppliers.

A report by China Labor Watch claims there are continuing violations at Catcher Technology, a light-metal manufacturing plant in the Chinese industrial city Suqian that makes products for Apple, and other [technology companies](#).

In addition, Bloomberg News talked with employees at Catcher, one of whom complained about "sufferings" she keeps hidden from her family.

"My hands turned bloodless white after a day of work," a woman who makes the equivalent of a little more than \$2 an hour told Bloomberg, which reported that Catcher workers make iPhone frames and components for MacBooks. According to China Labor Watch's report, Catcher workers are supposed to work 8 hours a day, five days a week but often end up working 10 hours a day, six days a week.

China Labor Watch, a New York-based nonprofit group, advocates workers' rights in China. It conducted an investigation from October 2017 to January 2018 and interviewed about 50 Catcher workers, a spokeswoman told SiliconBeat.

Apple had no comment when reached by SiliconBeat, but a spokeswoman told Bloomberg that the company interviewed more than 150 Catcher employees and found no violations.

Besides long working hours, China Labor Watch findings include inadequate time spent on training that leaves workers uninformed about potential risk factors, "excessive" loud noise at the plant and cafeteria food that makes workers sick. In addition, it that found workers did not have enough hot water for their showers, and that the gloves some of them were given did not provide enough protection from cutting fluids that touched their hands.

The group also said its undercover investigator had to leave after four weeks "due to respiratory issues" from "severe pollution at the factory."

In addition, China Labor Watch says that for workers who quit Catcher, wages are not paid on the day of resignation as the law requires.

Bloomberg reports that Catcher has a market value of more than \$8 billion.

In November, Apple's largest supplier, Foxconn, was accused of making teenagers work illegal overtime to assemble the iPhone X. Apple said at the time to the Financial Times, which reported the charges, that its own audit found no forced overtime.

Apple has said that it has made progress over the past several years in ensuring better working conditions for the workers who make its products overseas. According to its most recent Supplier Responsibility progress report, the company conducted more than 700 audits of suppliers in 2016.

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