



GARMENT STORE REFERENCE SYSTEM

It is important for garment factories to ensure effective storage and warehousing. Fabrics and materials are the most expensive part of the production process in the garment industry and therefore need to be well stored and easily located. An effective Store Reference System will allow easy tracking and monitoring of inventory, ensure necessary fabrics and accessories can be found quickly and protect the stored products. The system described below is a simple one that is similar to the reference system used in a library.

PROSPECTIVE USERS:

Setting up an effective reference system for managing inventory in the garment storeroom requires involvement from all staff in the warehouse team.

This reference system can be applied to garment factories.

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

- Disorderly warehouse making it difficult to quickly find necessary materials for production.
- Damage or soiling of fabric or accessories through poor storage.
- Over-ordering of fabrics and accessories because of poor inventory management.

PROCESS

Warehouse staff develop an effective reference system and process. The team needs to identify all the different kinds of inventory and design a classification system that makes sense. This system then needs to be linked with the storage racks used in the warehouse.

A visual display system needs to be established so that staff can immediately see which specific product is on which shelf. There should also be a ledger or computer based register of the system.

Steps in implementation

1. Develop a shelf or storage rack system consisting of several racks, each rack having several blocks and levels. Materials can be stored on the racks.
 2. Develop a rack code system to code all the racks in the stores. Every rack should have its rack code placed on the two ends of the rack, in a high position so that people can find it easily. The rack code can be a combination of alphabetical letters and numbers and should indicate the exact position of the rack by order. For example, racks can be coded as 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B.
 3. Develop a detailed code system for all blocks in the rack. The block code should specify the exact position of the block in the rack by indicating its column and level (for example, in Vietnamese, the code 1^bT2 means the block on the 2nd level of the first column of the rack).
 4. Establish a reference table for each rack. The reference tables should be placed on one or both ends of the racks with the rack code on the top. Reference tables should be clearly-written, easy to read, and easy to update when new products arrive.
 5. The rows of the reference table indicate the column codes and the columns of the table show the level code. Each cell in the table includes a small code reference card to indicate the code of the materials stored in a block. Combining the corresponding column code and level code for each cell, people can find the exact position of the materials which has the code reference card in the cell. For example, the card with the code 01301 on the reference table of the rack 2B placed on the cell with corresponding column code of 1b and level code of 1 indicate that the materials with the code 01301 was placed at the 1st block at the 1st level of the rack.
 6. An empty block should be indicated by an empty cell in the reference table.
 7. As products arrive in the warehouse, classify all inventory according to clients, types of materials, colour, size, etc. Each individual item should have a code (e.g. client J.Wabc34 indicating the type of fabric for Jack Wolfskin client).
 8. Create a set of reference cards for each code. The first reference card which will be placed on the materials should be more detailed including key information about the code, type and color of the materials. This reference card should be larger (e.g. A4 size), clearly-written and easy to read from a distance. If possible, use different card colors for different categories. The second reference card which would be placed on the reference table is smaller and indicated mainly the code of materials.
 9. Put the small reference card in the appropriate empty cell of the reference table.
 10. Cross-reference by putting code reference cards on the appropriate set of materials on the shelf.
 11. For each item of inventory (each code number), keep a record of the code (in a book or computer file), and the shelf position for that item.
 12. When materials in a block are taken out, remember to remove the two corresponding cards from the shelf and the reference table and update the database in the computer or book.
 13. Establish and maintain order and consistency by following the same process for all inventory as it arrives in the warehouse. Do not place any inventory on shelves until it has been registered and coded and the appropriate reference table updated on the racks.
 14. For small items, use the same process in creating, updating and maintaining the reference table and reference cards. Use appropriate boxes for small details to ensure good organisation and storage. The size and format of the reference cards should be modified to fit small-sized materials.
- Other important tips:
- Always store fabric on racks, not on the floor.
 - Always store fabric lying down, not standing on the end of the rolls.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Boards to create reference tables.
- Paper or card to create reference cards.
- Appropriate shelves for materials.
- Appropriate boxes for accessories.
- Resource people.
- Training of all warehouse staff.

POSITIVE IMPACT

- Helps to store materials in a systematic manner.
- Easy and quick to find needed materials.
- Easy to monitor materials.
- Reduces damage to inventory through poor storage.
- Reduces over-ordering through more effective inventory control.

CHALLENGES AND PITFALLS

- Investment needed to set up the shelves system.
- All warehouse staff need to be trained in the new system and fully understand how to use it. It can be difficult for staff to change their habits and systems, so training and monitoring is very important.
- Efforts required to maintain the system.

INDICATORS FOR MONITORING

- Reference table created.
- Reference cards created and placed on materials.
- Able to track materials from reference table.
- All warehouse staff understand and use the system.





Good Practice Guide



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