



USAID's Engendering Industries Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries:

11.13 Create and adopt a workplace menstrual health management (MHM) policy to ensure that those who menstruate can manage their MHM needs safely and with dignity while at work

About Your Gender Equality Plan

The following Gender Equality Plan was generated using Engendering Industries' online tool: [The Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries](#). The best practices listed in this plan were identified and included to fill gender equality gaps at your organization. The information included in your plan provides an overview of how to implement best practices, challenges to implementation, and markers of success. More information and resources for advancing gender equality at your company are available at EngenderingIndustries.org.

Description

Align policy with national legal provisions and international best practice related to MHM

Conduct a gender audit of existing sanitation facilities with attention to MHM and provide adequate facilities that are safe, clean, and single sex

Ensure women are included in policy formulation and that their inputs are considered

Policy should address hard infrastructure topics, such as:

- Access to cold and warm water and soap
- Safe and culturally appropriate disposal options
- Doors can be locked and provide full privacy

Policy should also address and provision for soft measures, including:

- Mindset and process shift (e.g., women should not need to ask or declare when they want to use the restroom)
- MHM sensitization activity to build awareness of managers and supervisors on women's menstruation needs
- Support women's self-esteem and self-awareness, that this is a natural process and help them to overcome culturally rooted stereotypes and negative feelings about their body

Challenges to Implementation

Cultural stigma surrounding MHM may prevent women from discussing their MHM needs

Field offices or work sites may not have physical infrastructure to ensure that men and women have separate latrines or toilets Facilities may be unclean, unsafe or lack disposal bins, water and other necessary provisions

Cost of improving or building new facilities

Supervisors may be reluctant to provide female staff with breaks to attend to MHM needs, including pain or discomfort

Gendered power dynamic between male supervisors and female employees may further inhibit women from asking for breaks, leave, or other necessary accommodations while menstruating

What Success Looks Like

Facilities are appropriate and issues detected through audits are resolved in reasonable time and with adequate resources

Female employees report being able to manage their periods without suffering income loss, using sick leave, reducing their productivity, or experiencing negative emotional or physical effects (e.g., stigma)

Managers and male employees' awareness raised, contributing to reduce stigma, unwanted attention, or friction around menstruation

Resources and Tools

Guide: [Integrating Gender into Workplace Policies](#) (USAID)

Guide: [WASH@Work: A Self-Training Handbook](#) (see pg. 107 f.) (ILO)

Guide: [Female-friendly public and community toilets: A guide for planners and decision makers](#) (WaterAid, UNICEF and WSUP)

Guide: [Menstrual Hygiene Matters, Chapter 8: Menstrual hygiene in the workplace](#) (WaterAid)

Report/Study: [Menstrual Hygiene Management and Women's Economic Empowerment](#) (USAID)

Report/Study: [Gender, COVID-19, and Menstrual Hygiene Management](#) (Gender & COVID-19 Working Group)

Report/Study: [Menstrual Hygiene Management in the Workplace](#) (USAID)

Article: [Putting an End to Period Stigma and Taboo](#) (Plan International UK)