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01. Manufacturing & Production

Detailed Employment Manual for Foreign Job Seekers in Korea

Purpose of This Manual Korean manufacturing covers automotive parts, machinery, metal, plastics, electrical goods, household products, chemicals, and consumer goods. Foreign workers can enter not only as production operators but also as R&D staff, design engineers, process engineers, quality specialists, maintenance technicians, team leaders, and overseas technical support staff.

1. Where Foreign Professionals and Workers Can Find Opportunity

Major hiring locations: Southern Gyeonggi, Incheon, Siheung, Ansan, Chungcheong industrial zones, Busan and Gyeongsang areas, Daegu-Gyeongbuk, Gwangju-Jeonbuk, small industrial cities and agro-industrial complexes.

Possible visa pathways to review: E-9, E-7-1, E-7-3, E-7-4, F-series and H-2 (case-by-case)

- Professional, research, design, and management roles require a strong link between education, experience, and the actual job.
- Field and skilled roles are judged by practical ability, safety awareness, attendance, shift adaptation, and long-term stability.
- Management, service, and customer-facing roles need Korean reporting skills plus the ability to connect the company with overseas markets, workers, or customers.
- The actual permitted work depends on personal status, employer type, exact job code, and work location. Always verify before signing a contract.

Key Decision Rule A company may want to hire you, but that alone does not guarantee visa approval. Review the chain carefully: current status → target job → employer eligibility → salary and experience requirements.

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2. Job Map: Main Roles and Entry Conditions

The table below summarizes representative roles in this industry. Even within one industry, simple work, skilled work, specialist jobs, and management jobs can have very different hiring standards and visa implications.

Role	Main Duties	Strong Candidate Profile	Evidence to Prepare
R&D / Product Development	Improve materials and products, run tests, analyze failures	Relevant degree, lab or industrial experience, problem solving	Papers, patents, test reports, before/after data
Mechanical / Product Design	2D/3D drawings, BOM, tolerances, prototypes	Mechanical or materials background, CAD/CAE, drawing reading	Portfolio, models, released products
Process Engineering	Line balancing, automation, cycle-time and yield improvement	Production process knowledge, PLC basics, data analysis	OEE, cycle time, scrap reduction data
CNC / Machining	Operate lathes, milling and machining centers	Blueprint reading, tooling, measuring instruments	Machine list, materials, tolerances, output records
Injection / Press / Mold	Set conditions, change molds, solve defects	Mold, material, safety and troubleshooting knowledge	Condition sheets, photos, defect improvement cases
Assembly / Packaging / Inspection	Assemble parts, visual checks, labeling, packing	Concentration, manual dexterity, standard work compliance	Daily output, inspection experience, line history
Quality Control / QA	Incoming, in-process and final inspection, customer claims	SPC, root cause analysis, measuring tools	Inspection records, 8D reports, defect reduction
Maintenance / Utilities	Preventive maintenance, troubleshooting, air and electrical systems	Mechanical/electrical basics, LOTO, repair experience	Maintenance logs, downtime reduction, certificates

How to Choose the Right Position to Apply For

1. Start with the job you have actually done the longest, not the title you like best.
2. Choose a second option that connects well to your degree, certification, or transferable skills.
3. Match the level of role to your Korean communication level and practical adaptation.
4. Use exact job names, machines, products, systems, or customers instead of broad titles.
5. Confirm that the contract title matches the real work you will do.

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3. Conditions for Research, Specialist, Design, and Management Roles

3-1. R&D Personnel

Connect your degree, projects, and industry knowledge to the actual products made by the employer.

3-2. Design Personnel

Engineers should explain measurable results such as yield improvement, reduced downtime, or lower defect rates.

3-3. Process and Quality Engineers

Design and technical candidates should show deliverables, not only job titles: drawings, reports, layouts, testing plans, or improvement cases.

Evidence Professional Candidates Should Prepare

- Degree certificate and transcript, plus a short explanation of relevant coursework when useful.
- Employment certificates showing period, position, duties, weekly hours, and employer contact information.
- A project portfolio that explains the problem, your role, tools, and measurable outcomes.
- Papers, patents, drawings, test reports, dashboards, or work samples that can be shared legally.
- A one-page English or Korean role summary that explains why you fit the exact job.

4. Conditions for Field, Skilled, and Operational Roles

4-1. Standard Work and Safety Compliance

Shop-floor workers are evaluated on safety, attendance, discipline, and ability to follow standard work accurately.

4-2. Documenting Equipment Experience

List the exact machines, materials, tolerances, and products you handled instead of saying only “factory experience.”

4-3. Accepting Regional, Shift and Dormitory Work

Accepting shift work, dormitory life, and local factory locations greatly increases hiring chances.

Evidence Field Candidates Should Prepare

- Work photos or videos that do not expose company secrets or personal data.
- A list of machines, tools, products, materials, or systems you actually used.
- Numbers such as daily output, team size, defect rate, handled volume, or job scale.
- Training cards, licenses, or certificates with issuing body and validity date.
- A real supervisor or HR contact from a former employer who can verify your work.

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5. What Korean Employers Usually Want in Foreign Hires

- A person who understands the role and asks questions when something is unclear.
- Reliable attendance, punctuality, and accurate handover behavior.
- Fast reporting when there is a defect, delay, safety issue, or customer problem.
- Respect for safety, quality, and procedure over personal guesswork.
- Ability to cooperate across different nationalities and departments.
- A realistic explanation of regional work, dormitory life, shift work, or long-term plans.
- A clear reason why the company benefits from your language, market, or technical background.

6. Korean Workplace Culture: What You Need to Understand

- Daily handover, 5S, work logs, and strict reporting are common.
- Korean manufacturers value quick reporting of defects and equipment issues instead of hiding them.
- Punctuality, team coordination, and line discipline are more important than speed alone.
- If you do not understand an instruction, ask again. Saying “OK” without understanding creates risk.
- Important matters are often followed by written messages, logs, or reports. Keep records when appropriate.
- Hierarchy exists, but abuse, violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination are not acceptable.
- When conflict happens, report facts clearly rather than arguing emotionally in public.

7. Safety, Rights, and Legal Protection

- If you do not understand safety training, ask for repetition, translation, or demonstration.
- If PPE is missing or the task feels unsafe, stop and ask the supervisor to clarify the method.
- Keep evidence if there is unpaid wages, injury, abuse, harassment, or illegal document retention.
- Use official channels when needed: immigration support, labor counseling, police, or emergency services.

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8. How Regional, Rural, Remote, and Shift Work Can Become an Opportunity

Why Regional Jobs Matter In Manufacturing & Production, real jobs are often concentrated in industrial, rural, coastal, or project-based locations rather than central Seoul. Candidates who are open to these locations face less competition and may receive housing, meals, shuttle buses, or faster promotion opportunities.

Advantages of Regional or Remote Work

- Less competition than major-city positions.
- Dormitory, meals, or shuttle support may reduce living costs.
- Smaller or regional employers may give responsibility earlier.
- Long-term work can create better paths toward skill recognition or status upgrades where applicable.
- Daily living costs are often lower outside major metropolitan areas.

Conditions You Must Check Carefully

- Dormitory address, room occupancy, heating/cooling, bathroom, internet, and utility rules.
- Distance to the workplace and availability of transport for night or early shifts.
- Access to hospitals, banks, supermarkets, and foreign support centers.
- Rules for home visits, long business travel, or relocation to another worksite.
- Exact structure of base salary, fixed allowances, night pay, overtime pay, and deductions.

How to Talk About Shift Work in an Interview

Do not say only “I can do shifts.” Explain whether you have done rotating shifts before, how you manage sleep and health, how you will commute, and how long you are prepared to stay. If you have a health limit, disclose it honestly before hiring.

Warning Signs You Should Not Ignore

- Actual duties are different from the employment contract.
- Unclear rules for overtime, night work, or dormitory deductions.
- Protective equipment is missing or safety training is skipped.
- The visa category does not match the real job.

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9. Practical Job-Application Roadmap

1. Check your current immigration status and whether the target role can realistically match it.
2. Select one or two realistic job targets and prepare a short role statement for each.
3. Prepare translations and, where needed, official confirmation of education, experience, and certificates.
4. Customize your Korean-style résumé and portfolio for the exact role.
5. State clearly your preferred region, shift availability, expected salary, housing needs, and start date.
6. Use the STAR method in interviews to explain practical work, problem-solving, safety, or customer cases.
7. When you receive an offer, review both the role and the visa pathway together.
8. Check the contract, housing rules, deductions, allowances, and working-hour system carefully.
9. After joining, understand the safety orientation and role training before signing acknowledgments.
10. Set 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day goals and ask for supervisor feedback.

10. Interview Questions You Should Prepare For

- Why do you want to work in Manufacturing & Production in Korea?
- What was the most important task you handled in your last job, and what result did you achieve?
- How did you respond when there was a defect, customer issue, delay, accident risk, or equipment failure?
- What will you do if you do not fully understand a Korean instruction?
- How long can you work in a regional area, remote site, or shift system?
- What value do you bring because of your language, market knowledge, or technical background?

Useful Korean Workplace Terms to Learn

- Attendance
- Shift
- Overtime
- Special workday
- Safety training
- Work instruction
- Handover
- Defect
- Breakdown
- Report
- Approval
- PPE
- Risk
- Emergency stop
- Dormitory
- Deduction
- Payslip

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- Employment contract

Final Checklist Before You Accept a Job

- State clearly how your degree, experience, and target job are connected.
- Use numbers in your résumé: machines used, customers served, output, defect rate, sales, test cases, or project scope.
- Prepare Korean workplace language separately from TOPIK scores.
- Be honest about willingness for regional work, shifts, dormitory life, or travel.
- Check visa fit before signing because a company’s hiring intention does not automatically mean the visa will be approved.
- Confirm the job title, worksite, salary, allowances, hours, holidays, and dormitory deductions in writing.
- False experience, fake certificates, or using another person’s training card can seriously damage future employment and immigration status.

Official Support Reminder Before signing a contract, verify the exact work, visa pathway, and employer conditions with the relevant official channels. For safety or labor issues, preserve evidence such as payslips, messages, schedules, photos, and hospital records.

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