

Amazon Worker COVID-19 Survey Data Brief

May 21, 2020



Change to Win conducted a nationwide online survey between April 29th and May 9th, 2020 of **4,348 workers** across the Amazon system – including workers in all types of Amazon warehouses, Whole Foods grocery stores, and Amazon subcontracted companies, such as delivery service providers (DSP drivers). This memo highlights the key survey findings.

SUMMARY

Workers across the Amazon system face serious health and safety risks across the company’s massive logistics and retail operations during the pandemic. Amazon, Whole Foods, and Amazon-subcontracted workers report:

- Observing a lack of training about COVID-19 risks;
- Feeling that they cannot miss a shift of work when they feel sick because they lack paid sick leave or fear retaliation by management; and
- Seeing workers terminated, disciplined, or threatened with discipline for speaking out for better safety conditions.

COVID-19-specific safety training: Workers report a critical lack of training about the hazards associated with COVID-19 at their Amazon, Whole Foods, or Amazon subcontractor workplaces. More than one-third of all respondents (35%) reported getting no training at all, and an even higher percentage of DSP drivers (45%) and fulfillment center workers (41%) reported the same.

Prioritizing production over safety: The lack of training is particularly stark given the spread of COVID-19 within the Amazon system. Amazon does not release the number of COVID-19 cases among its workforce, but press reports say there have been at least 600 cases in more than 125 facilities as of late April.¹ Of those surveyed, six in ten (60%) respondents were aware of confirmed cases of COVID-19 at their Amazon workplaces. Employees that work in Amazon warehouses – either inside fulfillment, sortation, or delivery stations – were the most likely to report COVID-19 positive cases at their facilities, with three in four (75%) reporting cases. Of those who indicated they were aware of positive cases at their workplaces, a majority (60%) reported that their workplaces were either never or only partially closed or sanitized following the confirmed cases.

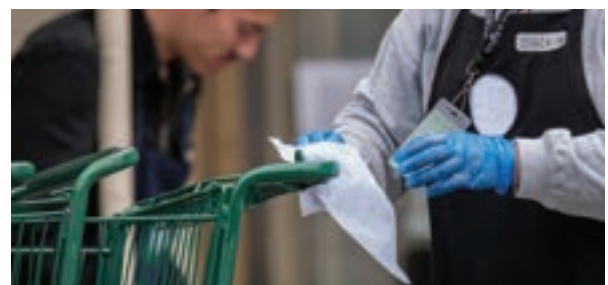
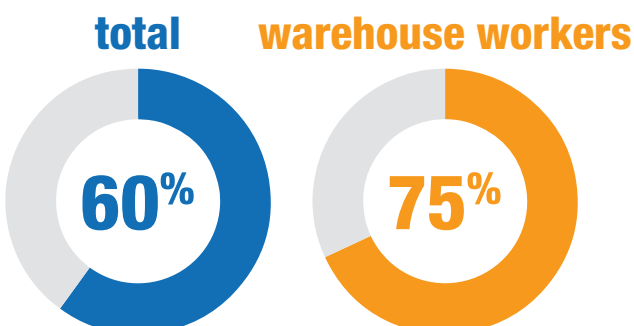


Figure 1: Respondents aware of confirmed cases



Reporting to work feeling sick: Despite Amazon's claims that the company is prioritizing worker health over production, one in nine workers (11%) reported going to work feeling sick in the last six weeks. Of those who reported going to work feeling sick, 63% identified doing so because of a lack of sufficient paid sick leave and 52% out of fear of being disciplined, losing hours, or being penalized in another way by management for not showing up to their shifts.²

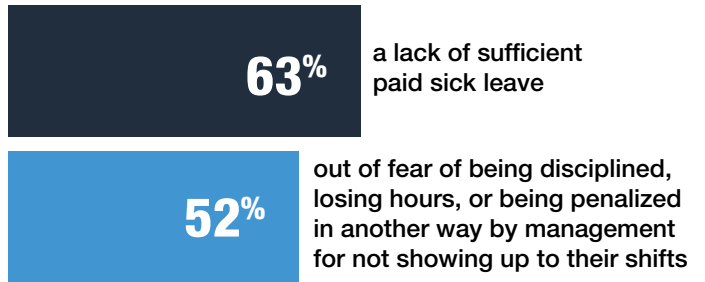
Figure 2: Workers reporting to work feeling sick



The lack of adequate sick leave and fear of retaliation for missing work not only pose potential health risks for co-workers, but also for Amazon's customers. Of those respondents that work in positions with potential customer contact – such as Whole Foods grocery workers, DSP drivers (who make deliveries to customer's homes and businesses), and those employed at Amazon Fresh and Amazon retail locations – 87% report coming into contact with customers on their shifts and a majority (56%) report interacting with more than 50 customers per shift. Yet, 10% of these customer-facing workers reported going to work sick in the last six weeks.

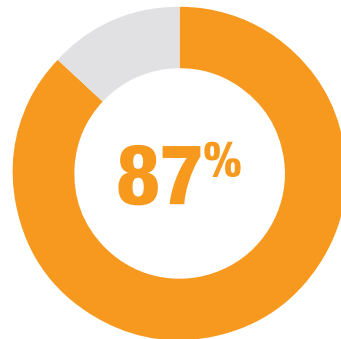


Figure 3: Workers report going to work sick because of



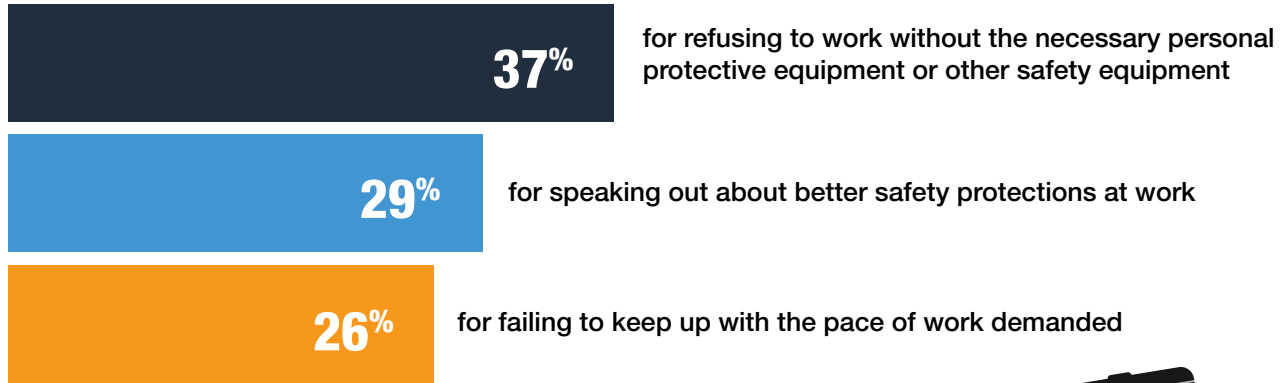
Further, workers indicated that Amazon's recent announcement ending its unlimited unpaid time off (UPT) program will have serious impacts on them. Of those respondents who were eligible for the UPT program, 40% report that the change will likely result in the employees risking their own health and the health of their families by going back to work.

Figure 4: Grocery workers and DSP drivers reporting direct customer contact



Discipline and retaliation for standing up for safety: Workers report that since the pandemic began, Amazon has stepped up its discipline of and retaliation against workers for advocating for their own safety. Specifically, workers report that their employer has terminated, disciplined, or threatened to discipline employees at their facilities for the following reasons:

Figure 5: Reasons for discipline or retaliation



Workers risk their health to ship non-essential items:

While brick and mortar stores have been shuttered in much of the country, survey respondents report that Amazon has continued to ship non-essential items such as hammocks, fish tanks, sex toys, and pool floaties. In fact, more than two-thirds of (70%) of fulfillment center workers – who pick and pack up customers’ items – report that 50% or more of the items they handle are non-essential. Amazon has continued to place workers in danger of contracting COVID-19 in order to ship non-essential goods.



Figure 6: Respondents by Facility Type

Facility Type	Respondents	Percent of Total
Whole Foods Grocery Stores	2,008	46.2%
Amazon Fulfillment Center	1,274	29.3%
Amazon Delivery Station (DSP drivers)	283	6.5%
Amazon Sortation Center	178	4.1%
Amazon Delivery Station (inside)	140	3.2%
Other facilities	465	10.7%

¹ Keith Zubrow, “Amazon Worker: At Least 600 Amazon Employees Stricken by Coronavirus,” 60 Minutes, May 10, 2020, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/amazon-workers-with-coronavirus-60-minutes-2020-05-10/>; Daniel A. Medina, “As Amazon, Walmart, and Others Profit Amid Coronavirus Crisis, Their Essential Workers Plan Unprecedented Strike,” The Intercept, April 28, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/04/28/coronavirus-may-1-strike-sickout-amazon-target-whole-foods/>.

² Note: workers were asked to indicate all the reasons for going to work feeling sick, so the percentages sum to a number greater than one.