



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2020

Loren Sweatt
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Labor for Occupational Safety and Health
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Sweatt:

Since March of this year and the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, our offices have been in regular contact with many constituents who work in warehouse and fulfillment facilities for Amazon. These constituents have detailed a disturbing number of unsafe working conditions and workplace management policies that run counter to CDC guidance for personal safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, we have worked together to communicate worker concerns to Amazon's corporate management in a series of letters, attached, detailing conditions in our districts. While Amazon has provided our offices with an accounting of the corporate policies they have announced, we have consistently heard from our constituents that these policies are not being implemented on the ground by Amazon management in their warehouse facilities. Worker concerns persist, from an inability to maintain social distancing to a lack of personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer. This is not isolated to our districts, as reports continue to surface across the country about unsafe conditions in Amazon facilities and Amazon workers dying from COVID-19.

To illustrate the credible fears Amazon workers in our districts have, we have compiled a short summary of the unacceptable conditions they are facing inside the DTW1 facility in Romulus, Michigan:

- Workers have observed no increase in facility cleanings or the availability of cleaning supplies. Workers have reported seeing a facility-wide cleaning just once, and cleaning products are difficult to find and not readily available at workstations.
- Workstations are only three feet apart in some places, rendering social distancing impossible. Workers who complained to management have been threatened with discipline or termination. Management continues to spread misinformation about social distancing, including telling employees that a person is not at risk of exposure unless they stood within six feet of an individual who tested positive for more than 15 minutes.

- Amazon’s demanding “Time Off Task” limits and quotas have not been adjusted to allow workers enough time to wash their hands, use the restroom, or abide by social distancing.
- Workers are not notified with any specificity of positive cases amongst their co-workers. Workers are not provided with information about what shifts and workstations employees who tested positive worked at, and workers receive notification three to seven days after the positive test is known. At least 25 individuals who work at DTW1 have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Amazon’s worker leave policies do not allow Amazon workers to stay home from work to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Sick workers are going to Amazon facilities, as even workers in medically ordered quarantine are being denied paid leave unless they can produce a positive COVID-19 test result. Amazon has ended its unlimited unpaid time off policy, and multiple employees who cannot safely report to work as long as Amazon warehouses remain hotspots for infection have reported being denied a personal leave of absence.

Amazon operates more than 100 fulfillment centers across the U.S., employing hundreds of thousands of people. Inadequate safety measures in these facilities present unacceptable risks for workers and threaten to exacerbate our larger public health crisis. We know that OSHA is aware of these risks and has undertaken investigations into specific Amazon facilities across the country in recent weeks.

In light of the continued spread of COVID-19 through Amazon facilities, the number of workers affected, and the millions of packages leaving their warehouses during this crisis, we request that OSHA conduct an immediate investigation into workplace safety in Amazon facilities nationwide and issue guidance to Amazon about policies it must implement to keep their workers safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know this is not the first time in recent years that Members of Congress have raised serious concerns about worker safety inside Amazon facilities, and we would appreciate your prompt reply.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or need help connecting with affected Amazon workers.

Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress (MI-13)



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress (MI-12)

Cc:

Jay Carney, SVP, Corporate Affairs, Amazon
Beth Galetti, SVP, Human Resources, Amazon
Brian Huseman, VP, Public Policy, Amazon
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