

The Amazon warehouse staff can't go home: 'I don't want to overdo it, but I need that 22 USD / h, I need this job!'

What if I am infected? What if I cannot recover? Add 2 USD an hour to risk my life? I mean, I will take the money, but I feel my life is worth more. I don't want to overdo it, but I need \$ 22 an hour to risk my life.

Life in the Corona Virus Season is a series of articles interviewing people across the country, people who have had life turned upside down or who are experiencing stress due to uncertainties ahead.

We interviewed an Amazon employee at the age of 2x, worked at a large warehouse in California. The organization of employees in other warehouses had asked to increase labor rights for warehouse staff, and was successful. . But the repository in California doesn't have such an organization.



If I could stay home, I would be home, but I need this job. We were equipped with gloves and hand sanitizer, but just that much, nothing else protected us from corona virus. Everything is touched by 1,000 hands: people touch at manufacturers, distributors, ports, trucks; and the hands that make up the shelves that hold the goods in transit. Then I took out each item, put it in my counter and the counter went to the other hands: the picker, the packer, the carrier. We work very fast, and certainly sweat. The warehouse doesn't have recirculation gas system. What if someone sneezes and sticks to the items, what if my whole department, my entire warehouse is infected?

As my role, I stood in a train station and accepted items - toys, books, clothes, appliances, even dildos in boxes. I took each item and moved it to a counter with a shelf next to it. When I have filled the counter, it will drive

itself, and it will deliver the goods to the shipment area. Customers always want to receive the goods as quickly as possible and one of our working days revolves around that desire. Before the pandemic, I worked from 6:00 pm to 4:30 am, 10 hours / day, 4 days / week. During the high season, I have to work overtime: 5 days / week, 12 hours / day. My basic salary is 15.55 USD, plus 60 cents for night work, so my salary is 16.15 USD / hour and about 23 USD for the total overtime. We have benefits like: dental insurance, vision and health, and a superannuation fund. Normally, every month I will bring home my 1900 USD.

Because of the corona virus, the demand increases. So we have to work 5 days / week, 10 hours / day. The number of employees has been halved. I don't know if they think it's due to fear of infection or because of being infected. I had no idea. Rumor has it that 50 employees here were taken for corona virus testing. I know, at least one employee has a positive result. A single mother told me, "I cannot put myself at risk of becoming infected." She is worried that if our city is frozen, she will not be able to return to her children. So she quit her job. I live with my extended family: there are both babies, and even the elderly. Every day, I wonder: what can I bring to them?



I often say I live at Amazon 3.5 days, but now most of the week I am here. I sleep all day and wake up at 3 or 4 pm. Eat, drive to work, arrive around 5:30, fetch water, try to use the restroom. Bathrooms are always a challenge. In a 10-hour shift, I have 2 hours of 15-minute breaks and 30-minute lunch breaks. And then there's 30 minutes called "free breaks" to do whatever I want. But to go to the toilet, go back home for 7-10 minutes, depending on the station you were assigned that day, so all day work, you can only go to the toilet 3 times. I have to drink a lot of water, my job is basically manual work, and I try to wash my hands well. Sometimes I don't go to the toilet when I need to because I will have to get a copy of it. If you exceed the "free time off", for any reason, you will receive a copy of the review. 6 criticism, you were fired.

You can also get a copy of your report if you don't do it fast enough. I had to move each item from the receiving area to my counter for a maximum of 12 seconds, which meant that I only had 5 seconds to go back and forth between the two areas. If my weekly rate does not exceed 80% of the request, I will be reviewed. 6 reviews: dismissal. I had to keep working, at full speed, in my head thinking that I could lose my job. I can arrange 600 items in a counter. And so on and so forth.

Last year, I was injured at work. According to the doctor's recommendation, I was allowed to add 3 seconds to transfer each item but Management did not agree. They gave me a month of unpaid leave. I do not have money to pay for my phone or credit card. I forced myself back to work before I fully recovered. Because the injury has not healed, I was unable to reach the required work rate. I immediately received 2 reviews. I still have pain from that injury. Those were my worst days.

Now things are extremely unusual. Items are usually entered, but they arrange aside; We only send essentials - and board games. I guess people are really trapped in the house. But mostly diapers, pills, alcohol, Lysol wet tissues, hand sanitizers, masks, gloves. We no longer retail these items. Customers who want to buy the combo: 4 bags of Lysol wet towels, combo of 5 bottles of hand sanitizer, large Vitamin Water boxes, and baby wet towels and bulk paper towels. Therefore, recently, the goods have been exhausted. Stressed employees: overworked but understaffed. And we still have to hit the scale. Even when exhausted, many people continue to work. I think that if someone really needs a salary, they can go to work even if they are sick.

I guess the company has changed a little. Full-time employees like me are usually entitled to 48 hours annual leave and no sick leave, but now if we test positive for corona virus, we will be paid sick pay 2 week. Normally, we could only get 20 hours a year on sick leave, but now we have more time off without any responsibility.

They also stopped group meetings to reduce contact and separate tables - although everyone still sat together in common spaces. They cut down the number of microwaves in the lunch area and the holding ovens will be placed 6 feet apart, but there are tons of staff, and lots of people still use them.

And they increased our salary by 2 USD / hour. 2 USD. What if I am infected? What if I cannot recover? Add 2 USD an hour to risk my life? I mean, I will take the money, but I feel my life is worth more. I don't want to overdo it, but I need 22 USD an hour so I have to risk my life. Probably 25 USD.

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