

French court confirms Amazon restrictions over virus

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roughly 10,000 employees in France

A French appeals court on Friday confirmed a ruling that ordered US online retailing giant Amazon to restrict its operations pending an evaluation of virus risks to its staff.

But while rejecting the appeal brought by Amazon, the Court of Appeal in Versailles outside Paris slightly widened the list of goods that Amazon is allowed to deliver in the meantime in France, the ruling said.

Amazon will be allowed to deliver digital products, office goods, pet supplies, groceries, drinks and personal care products as well as the essential health and food goods allowed in the previous ruling.

Amazon shut down its French warehouses last week after a court said it could deliver only food, hygiene or medical products pending a review of safety measures for its roughly 10,000 employees in France.

Dozens had staged walkouts at several sites before the ruling, saying they worked in close proximity in contravention of social distancing measures imposed by the government to limit infections.

The ruling came as Amazon was hiring tens of thousands of people to handle a surge in orders with lockdown measures shuttering traditional stores and compelling people to stay home.

The French court standoff has attracted close international attention, with Amazon in many countries enjoying a major bounce from consumers in lockdown desperate for online purchases.

Amazon has 48 hours to implement the new measures, and if it fails to

do so it will be fined 100,000 euros (\$108,000) per violation, also lower than the original amount of one million euros.

The slightly wider list of goods Amazon is allowed to deliver could see it reopening the closed warehouses. Amazon France has yet to comment on the new ruling.

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