

Amazon's injury rate jumped 20% last year, new report shows

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Injury rates at Amazon warehouses increased about 20% over the last year, according to a new analysis of company data.

In a report released Tuesday, the Strategic Organizing Center, a coalition of four [labor unions](#), analyzed data Amazon has submitted to the

Occupational Safety and Health Administration about its warehouses in 2021. That analysis found Amazon accounted for nearly half of all injuries in the warehouse industry last year and had a higher rate of injury than other non-Amazon facilities.

The serious injury rate at Amazon warehouses in 2021 was 6.8 per 100 workers, compared to a rate of 3.3 per 100 at other non-Amazon warehouses, according to the study. For workers who were seriously injured, Amazon employees needed an average of 19 more days to recover than workers at other non-Amazon warehouses.

In total, workers at Amazon facilities sustained roughly 38,300 injuries in 2021, compared to 27,700 in 2020 and 21,200 the year before.

"Amazon has spent years promising to improve safety at its warehouses," the report's authors stated. "Yet Amazon's injury rates still went up. ... Amazon is not doing enough to keep workers safe."

Pressured to slow the pace of work at its warehouses, Amazon has defended its safety record while committing millions to improving conditions in its distribution centers. In his final letter to shareholders before stepping down as CEO, Jeff Bezos a year ago committed the company to reducing repetitive-stress injuries incurred in Amazon's then-roughly 1,500 fulfillment centers worldwide and to investing \$300 million in safety projects.

"Despite what we've accomplished, it's clear to me that we need a better vision for our employees' success," Bezos said in the April 2021 letter. "We have always wanted to be Earth's Most Customer-Centric Company. We won't change that. ... (But) we are going to be Earth's Best Employer and Earth's Safest Place to Work."

In 2020, Amazon briefly slowed the expected pace of work at its

facilities, allowing workers extra time to account for measures to protect against the spread of COVID-19. Since then, it has resumed a pace that Washington's Department of Labor and Industries has pinned as unsafe and a direct cause of injury for workers.

"Many Amazon jobs involve repetitive motions, lifting, carrying, twisting and other physical work. Workers are required to perform these tasks at such a fast pace that it increases the risk of injury," the department wrote in a March citation for Amazon's Kent warehouse. "The company is aware of these hazards."

Washington's labor department has cited and fined Amazon four times in the last 11 months for violating workplace safety laws.

Amazon has appealed the first three citations and intends to appeal the fourth. In a November court filing related to a citation at its DuPont facility, the company said its productivity requirements "allow associates to work comfortably and safely." Amazon is "constantly looking for new opportunities" to minimize injuries with new technologies and procedures, it wrote.

It maintains that the rate of injury has actually gone down over time. In a safety report released in January, Amazon said the incident rate improved 24% from 2019 to 2020. The lost time incident rate, which accounts for the number of injuries and illnesses that result in time away from work, improved 43%, Amazon's analysis found.

Amazon has pledged to cut the injury rate at its warehouses in half by 2025 but the authors of the Strategic Organizing Center's report say its analysis has raised "significant questions about Amazon management's commitment to preventing worker injuries."

Concerns about the pace of work, employee safety and working

conditions at the warehouses have led some Amazon workers to pursue union campaigns, hoping to bring the company to the bargaining table to negotiate things like higher pay and more time for water and bathroom breaks.

Workers at a Staten Island facility voted earlier this month to form the first union at an Amazon warehouse in the U.S. Since then, organizers for its Amazon Labor Union say they have already heard from workers at 100 facilities across the country interested in starting their own union drive.

Workers in Bessemer, Alabama, are still awaiting the results of its union vote as contested ballots are counted.

The Strategic Organizing Center's report found the rate of injury increased over the last year at both facilities leading the union momentum. In Staten Island, JFK8 saw its injury rate increase 15% from 2020 to 2021. In Bessemer, at BHM1, it jumped 43%.

Amazon submitted data to OSHA for 906 facilities and a workforce of 566,736 people in 2021, according to the SOC.

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