

Amazon prioritizes medical supplies, staples for delivery

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Amazon on Tuesday made a priority of medical supplies and household staples, putting shipments of other goods on hold to focus on key items during the coronavirus outbreak.

"We are seeing increased [online shopping](#) and as a result some [products](#) such as household staples and [medical supplies](#) are out of stock," the [e-commerce](#) titan said.

"We are temporarily prioritizing household staples, medical supplies and other high-demand products coming into our fulfillment centers so we can more quickly receive, restock and ship these products to customers."

People hunkered down due to the deadly coronavirus have turned to Amazon for anything from toilet tissue to groceries and pet treats.

"There's enormous pressure on Amazon to meet these increased expectations," said Technalysis Research analyst Bob O'Donnell.

"Fairly or unfairly, people expect that Amazon will always have some things, like [toilet paper](#)."

Amazon spent years investing heavily in warehouses, distribution and delivery, often to the chagrin of Wall Street investors eager for quick profits.

Those investments appear to be paying off as Amazon becomes the go-to e-commerce site in a time of crisis.

If Amazon becomes a salvation for people unable or afraid to go out due to coronavirus risk, analysts say it could win new users worldwide and become a more entrenched habit for those who already dabble with e-commerce.

The best-case scenario for Amazon is "they look like a hero," said Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights and Strategy.

Seattle-based Amazon this week boosted pay to hourly workers and set out to hire 100,000 more US workers due to strain on its workforce.

"Getting a priority item to your doorstep is vital as communities practice social-distancing, particularly for the elderly and others with underlying health issues," senior vice president of worldwide operations Dave Clark said in a blog post.

"We are seeing a significant increase in demand, which means our labor needs are unprecedented for this time of year."

Amazon has also vigilantly scuttled price-gouging efforts by new vendors who stockpiled coveted supplies like breathing masks and hand sanitizers.

"It looks like Amazon is shutting most of them down, and doing it in a very visible fashion to send a message to others about gouging," analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group said.

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