



# Injuries, Dead-End Jobs, and Racial Inequity in Amazon's Minnesota Operations

A Case Study on the Human Costs of Amazon's Growth

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## *A Case Study on the Human Costs of Amazon's Growth*

### Executive Summary

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Amazon has not lived up to its promise of providing quality jobs to workers in the United States.<sup>1</sup> An analysis of the corporate giant's operations in Minnesota illustrates how it fails to provide a safe workplace, stable employment, and adequate compensation to its workers, who are disproportionately Black and include many East African immigrants. As Amazon expands its footprint throughout the country and in Minnesota—with new facilities opening in 2021 around the state—an analysis of Amazon's current warehouses in Minnesota reveals a range of grave concerns for workers, communities, and the public.<sup>2</sup> The authors of this report examined data from the U.S. Census, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for Amazon warehouses in Minnesota, with a particular focus on the two longest-standing Amazon facilities in the state, located in the Twin Cities suburb of Shakopee in Scott County. Key findings include the following:

- **Extreme rates of injury.** Amazon warehouse workers in Minnesota are more than twice as likely to be injured at work as other Minnesota warehouse workers. According to Amazon's own records from 2018 to 2020, the rate of injuries at its Minnesota warehouse facilities is 11.1 cases annually per 100 full-time-equivalent workers. This is the equivalent of one injury for every nine workers each year—more than double the rate at non-Amazon Minnesota warehouses (5.2) and more than four times the average rate for all private industries in Minnesota (2.7) during the same period. The warehousing industry average (including Amazon) in Minnesota during that period was 7.0 cases annually per 100 full-time-equivalent workers.<sup>3</sup> In particular, Amazon's flagship warehouse in Minnesota, the Shakopee fulfillment center, has consistently reported extremely high rates of injury. In 2020, no industry in Minnesota had a higher average injury rate than the Shakopee Amazon fulfillment center, as seen below in **Figure 3**.<sup>4</sup>

- **Racial earnings gap and occupational segregation.** Black workers are overrepresented in Scott County warehouses (which are mostly Amazon facilities), representing 38 percent of the warehousing workforce and only 8 percent of the total workforce in the Twin Cities.<sup>5</sup> (See **Figure 1.**) Additionally, Black warehouse workers' monthly earnings are only 63 percent of white warehouse workers' monthly earnings.<sup>6</sup> (See **Figure 2.**)
- **Triple-digit turnover rates.** Annual turnover at the Shakopee Amazon warehouses is as high as 170 percent. This means that for every job at the Shakopee Amazon facilities, almost two workers left their positions there over the course of a year. By contrast, turnover in Minnesota at non-Amazon warehouses was only about 61 percent.<sup>7</sup> (See **Figure 4** and **Table 1.**)
- **Wage decline in the warehouse sector.** Real wages for warehouse workers in Minnesota declined over 14 percent between 2015 and 2018, the years after Amazon began operating from Shakopee, as reflected by the latest available Census data.<sup>8</sup> (See **Figure 5.**) As of 2018, Scott County warehouses (mostly Amazon) represented about a third of all warehouse employment in Minnesota.<sup>9</sup>
- **Exploitation of seasonal and nonstandard workforce.** Amazon uses seasonal and nonstandard work arrangements to erode labor standards and thwart worker organizing.<sup>10</sup>
- **Costs to the public.** Amazon breeds poverty in communities, even as it profits from a government program that provides nutrition assistance to people living in poverty. It diverts public dollars away from schools and libraries in order to finance roads and highways feeding its facilities. Traffic around Amazon facilities creates pollution that harms the health of Shakopee residents and contributes to climate change. And Amazon's predatory pricing has contributed to the decline of competing retailers in Minnesota.<sup>11</sup>

The picture that emerges is a troubling one. Amazon has fueled its rapid growth by employing workers—many of them Black—in extremely dangerous jobs that pay inadequate wages and are not designed to provide long-term employment.<sup>12</sup> The relentless pace of work at Amazon warehouses—which the company enforces through its invasive electronic surveillance systems and harsh disciplinary practices—has had devastating impacts on these workers' bodies.<sup>13</sup> And while Amazon expands its operations by undercompensating warehouse workers and pressuring them to work at unsafe speeds, the company's profits have grown exponentially and reached new highs.<sup>14</sup>

Recently, Congress has begun taking important steps to rein in the growing monopoly power of Amazon, with Minnesota's Senator Amy Klobuchar taking a lead role as chair of the Senate Judiciary antitrust subcommittee.<sup>15</sup> Amazon already dominates the warehouse sector in Minnesota, with Scott County warehouses representing about a third of total warehouse employment in the state.<sup>16</sup> As Amazon pursues further expansion in Minnesota, it is time for Minnesota's state government to also take bold steps to respond to the negative impacts of Amazon's growing operations and address the specific harms affecting Minnesotans who have toiled to make that growth possible.

We conclude the report with recommendations for state lawmakers and regulators that, if adopted, would mitigate some of the worst impacts of Amazon's presence to date and lay the groundwork for the company to become a responsible employer that will truly help Minnesota

thrive. To start, the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Legislature, Minnesota OSHA, and other appropriate public agencies must take the following steps:

- Convene public hearings on Amazon’s presence in Minnesota;
- Launch a wall-to-wall Minnesota OSHA investigation of health and safety hazards in Amazon facilities;
- Mandate rest breaks and reasonable, transparent work-pace standards in the warehouse industry;
- Ban harmful and opaque surveillance and disciplinary policies such as “Time Off Task”; and
- Investigate and address occupational segregation and racial inequity at Amazon’s Minnesota operations.

By adopting these recommendations, Minnesota lawmakers and regulators can begin to mitigate the harm caused by Amazon and ensure that the company lives up to its promise to provide high-quality jobs and public benefit to the residents of the state.

## Recommendations for responses to Amazon's harm to Minnesota



### PUBLIC HEARINGS

Convene public hearings on Amazon’s presence in Minnesota.



### WALL-TO-WALL INVESTIGATION

Launch wall-to-wall MNOSHA investigation of Amazon facilities



### TRANSPARENT WORK-PACE STANDARDS

Ban “Time Off Task,” mandate breaks, and set reasonable and transparent work-pace standards in the warehouse industry.

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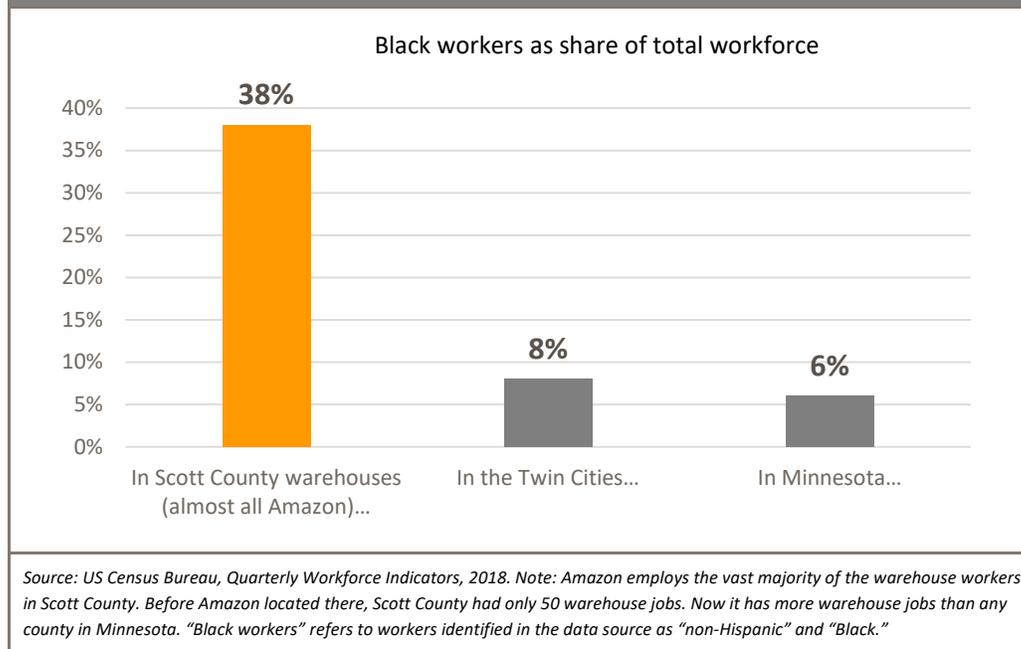
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## Introduction: Racial Injustice in Minnesota and at Amazon

When Amazon opened its first two major warehouses in Minnesota in 2015 and 2016, state and local officials joined the company to laud its commitment to creating quality jobs in the state.<sup>17</sup> But five years later, the reality of Amazon’s presence in Minnesota has proved to be much bleaker: Amazon has not lived up to the promise of providing the safe and stable employment that families and communities in the state need. Instead, it has left Minnesotans with injured bodies, COVID-related illness, and unsustainable, dead-end jobs with extremely high turnover. Amazon has relied heavily on Black Minnesotans in particular—including many East African immigrants—to power its growth, and those workers and their communities have borne many of the human costs.

As Amazon expands in Minnesota—with several new facilities opening in 2021, including a new fulfillment center in Lakeville—we take a closer look at the two Amazon distribution facilities located in the City of Shakopee in Scott County to better understand the impact that Amazon has had on Minnesota and Minnesotans in the five years since it opened those facilities. Established in August 2015 and October 2016, respectively, the Shakopee sortation and fulfillment centers regularly employ several thousand people, with seasonal fluctuations.<sup>18</sup>

**FIGURE 1. Black workers in Minnesota workforce, in the Twin Cities, and in Scott County warehouses**



The following sections of this report detail how working conditions at Amazon distribution facilities are dangerous and exhausting, taking a toll on workers’ bodies and wellbeing. Black workers have borne the brunt of these brutal working conditions because they make up a disproportionate share of Amazon warehouse workers in Minnesota. Black workers comprise about 38 percent of the workforce at Scott County warehouses (which are mostly represented by Amazon’s two facilities), even though only 8 percent of the Twin Cities workforce and 6 percent of the statewide workforce are Black.<sup>19</sup> A significant share of the Black Amazon workers in Shakopee are East African immigrants, many from Somalia.<sup>20</sup>

The proportion of Black workers at Amazon’s Minnesota facilities is also higher than at the company nationally. According to recent reports that Amazon is required to provide to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, about 32 percent of Amazon’s employees in the “laborers” category nationally are Black.<sup>21</sup>

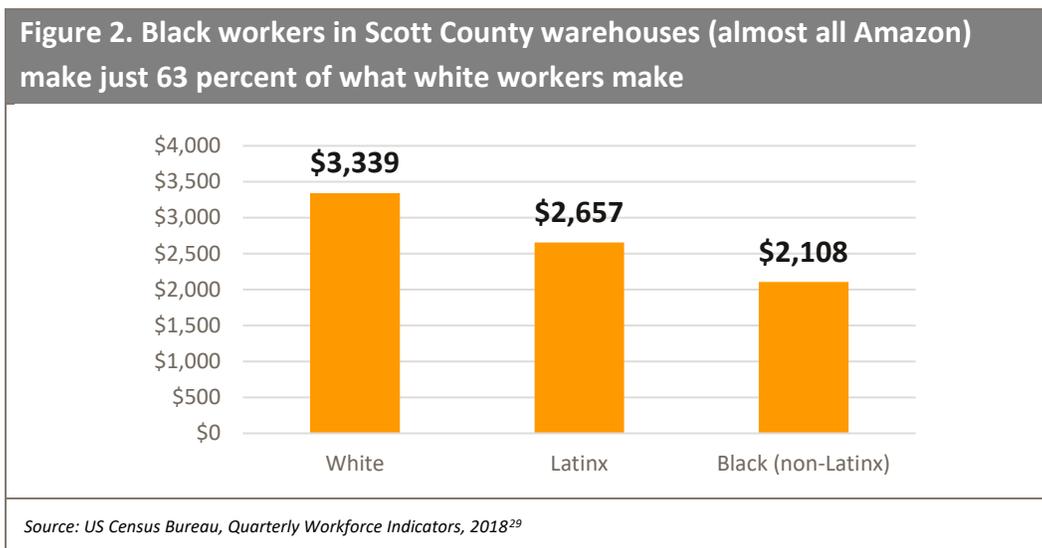
As this report shows, Amazon has failed to create the safe, stable, equal-pay jobs for which Black communities in Minnesota have long fought.<sup>22</sup> George Floyd’s tragic murder exposed the stark racial and economic inequality in Minnesota and the Twin Cities.<sup>23</sup> The metro area has one of the largest racial income gaps in the nation: The median annual income for Black families is *less than half* that of white families.<sup>24</sup> The Twin Cities–area Black poverty rate is significantly higher than the national Black poverty rate, while the white poverty rate is significantly lower than the national one.<sup>25</sup> Studies have documented rampant employment discrimination in Minnesota.<sup>26</sup>

Instead of providing quality, long-term jobs for Black Minnesotans, Amazon has exploited existing labor market inequities to fuel its growth at the expense of the wellbeing of its workers and their families. Minnesota’s experience with Amazon is another chapter in a long history in which elected officials stewarding Minnesota’s economy have continually failed Black workers and families.<sup>27</sup>

Minnesota policymakers and regulators must urgently address the role that Amazon plays in perpetuating existing racial inequities in the state. More broadly, they must confront the realities of Amazon’s growth in and impacts on Minnesota, redress the harms that Amazon workers have already suffered, prevent future harms, and reaffirm the basic premise that democracy, equity, and shared prosperity remain the best assurance of a vibrant, healthy, and fair society.

## Racial Wage Gap and Occupational Segregation

Black workers at Shakopee Amazon warehouses take home considerably less than white workers, as county-level earnings data reveal. In 2018, monthly earnings for Black workers at the warehouses averaged \$2,108, just 63 percent of what white workers at the warehouses made on average: \$3,339.<sup>28</sup>



While Amazon does not disclose occupational breakdowns of the workforce, the large gap in earnings suggests a high degree of occupational segregation at the Shakopee fulfillment center, with Black workers segregated into the lowest-paid jobs and jobs that are part-time or seasonal. Amazon also does not disclose statistics on the number of hours worked by those it employs, but recent Amazon job ads on Indeed.com for warehouse workers in Shakopee state that employees there can expect to work 16 to 24 hours a week.<sup>30</sup>

Black Amazon warehouse workers in Shakopee make just over \$2,000 a month, on average, which is not sufficient to cover basic expenses in the Twin Cities without another source of income.<sup>31</sup> With such low earnings, many may not even be able to meet their housing costs. About three in four white families in the Twin Cities own homes, but as a result of a long history of housing discrimination, only about one in four Black families do.<sup>32</sup> The lack of affordable housing close to the Shakopee facilities means long commutes for workers. In 2015, the City of Shakopee developed just 26 affordable homes.<sup>33</sup> Fifty-eight percent of Black renter households in the Twin Cities are housing cost-burdened, meaning they pay more than 30 percent of household income on housing.<sup>34</sup>

Minnesota's experience with Amazon is another chapter in a long history in which elected officials stewarding Minnesota's economy have continually failed Black workers and families.



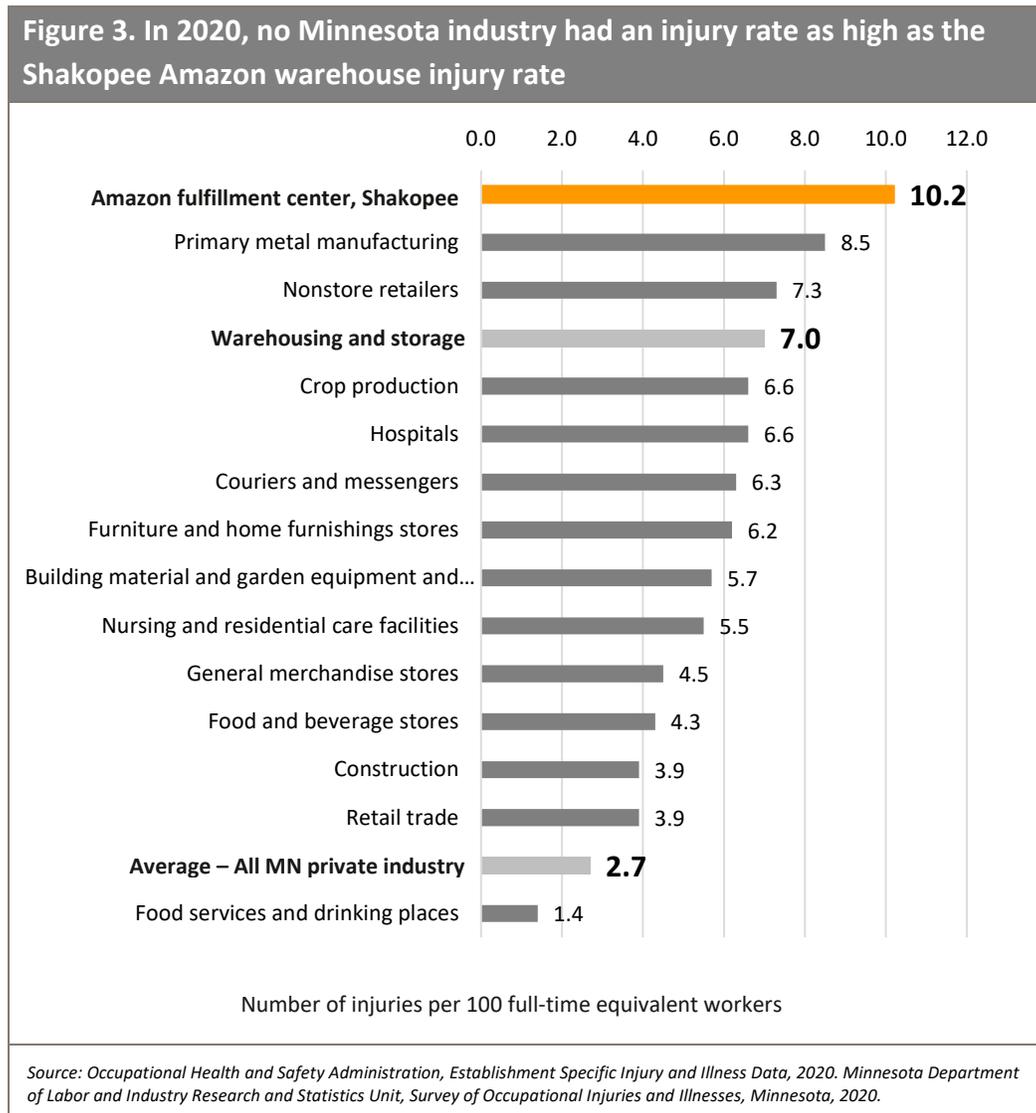
Source: The Awood Center

## Extreme Injury Rates and a Climate of Fear

Amazon’s management practices, including its electronic surveillance and disciplinary systems, result in extreme rates of injury for workers. An examination of Amazon’s self-reported injury data along with data from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry shows shockingly high rates of injury compared to both the warehousing industry in general and other industries in Minnesota. Also troubling are workers’ reports of inadequate responses to workplace injuries and draconian disciplinary practices.

### ***Amazon warehouse injury rates in Minnesota are astronomically high by every measure***

According to our analysis of Amazon’s own data as reported to OSHA, Amazon warehouses in Minnesota tallied 792 recordable work-related injuries (injuries that require medical treatment, transfer to light duty, or days of missed work) from 2018 to 2020. That translates to 11.1 injuries per 100 full-time-equivalent workers annually, or, in other words, one injury each year for every nine full-time-equivalent workers.<sup>35</sup>



This rate of injury per 100 full-time-equivalent workers is more than twice as high as the rate at non-Amazon Minnesota warehouses (5.2) and 59 percent higher than the Minnesota warehouse industry average rate of 7.0 (including Amazon). It is more than four times the average rate for all Minnesota industries of 2.7 injuries per 100 full-time equivalent workers annually.<sup>36</sup>

In particular, Amazon's flagship facility in Minnesota, the Shakopee fulfillment center, has chart-topping rates of injury. (See **Appendix 1** for an image of a recent OSHA 300 log detailing Amazon's self-reported workplace injuries at the Shakopee facilities.) In 2020, no industry in Minnesota had a higher rate of total injury than the rate reported at the Shakopee Amazon fulfillment center, as seen above in **Figure 3**.<sup>37</sup>

The injury rate at the Shakopee facility has also historically been higher than the nationwide average injury rate at Amazon warehouses for which data are available.<sup>38</sup>

In 2020, no industry in Minnesota had a higher rate of total injury than the rate reported at the Shakopee Amazon fulfillment center.

## Workers at Amazon warehouses in Minnesota...



**2x**

...are more than **twice as likely** to get injured as workers at non-Amazon Minnesota warehouses



**4x**

...are more than **4 times as likely** to get injured as the average private industry worker in Minnesota



**1 in 9**

...have a **1 in 9 chance** of being injured in a year



***Amazon management practices cause high rates of injuries that would be preventable with proper safeguards***

Amazon workers experience high rates and large numbers of work-related injuries that are preventable. The majority of these injuries are musculoskeletal injuries that are caused by the highly repetitive forceful motions that workers are required to make as they lift, carry, pull, push, twist, and bend to get the products to consumers.<sup>39</sup>

Further, the types of musculoskeletal injuries that workers suffer are ones that can stay with them for the rest of their lives, leading to chronic pain and an elevated risk of reinjury and long-term disability. The prospect of suffering a lifelong injury is particularly troubling for the younger workers who make up the majority of Amazon's Shakopee warehouse workforce. According to U.S. Census data, 20 percent of Scott County warehouse workers are younger than 25 years old, and 53 percent of warehouse workers are younger than 35 years old.<sup>40</sup>

After a recent investigation, Washington State OSHA recently cited an Amazon warehouse for failing to provide a safe workplace and violating the workplace safety law, stating that:

"Employees are expected to maintain a very high pace of work. Information collected documented that pressure is put on workers to maintain that pace without adequate recovery time to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal disorders."<sup>41</sup>

As Washington State OSHA notes, the high rates of injuries can be traced to the way that Amazon manages its workforce. The pace of work at Amazon fulfillment centers is grueling. Production goals for workers are constantly changing with new algorithms being introduced to speed up rates and force workers to work faster.<sup>42</sup> This rapid pace of work and high production quotas contribute to the high rates of work-related injuries at Amazon facilities. Some examples of quotas for workers in Amazon's Shakopee facilities include 260 items per hour for stowers (who shelve incoming items), 450 items per hour for pickers (who grab items that are ordered) and 230 items per hour for packers (who pack boxes to ship). Workers who do not meet their quotas face discipline or termination.

## Amazon quotas for workers



Sources: *The New Yorker*, *Minnesota Public Radio*, *SW News Media* 43

### ***Inadequate on-site medical care and documentation***

Workers have reported that Amazon—through its onsite medical care program, called “AmCare”—has failed to ensure that injured workers receive appropriate and timely medical care and that injuries are properly documented. The staff at AmCare—referred to by Amazon as “Onsite Medical Representatives”—are typically emergency medical technicians (EMTs), not physicians or registered nurses. As such, they are only qualified to provide a limited scope of first aid and help workers seek additional medical treatment when appropriate. However, Minnesota Amazon workers have reported that AmCare has not been providing appropriate and timely care. This can have disastrous consequences for workers.

One current Shakopee worker describes his experience with AmCare:

“I’ve gone so many times for AmCare. It’s like someone created a job for his cousin. They say, ‘Here, take this tablet.’ They give you an ice bag or a heat bag or tell you to take a tablet and they say you’ll be okay. Some of them don’t even listen to you when you tell them what you’re feeling.”<sup>44</sup>

Another Shakopee worker who was three months pregnant reported that extreme heat and lifting a heavy load caused her to faint, fall down, and bleed; she feared that she was miscarrying,

but AmCare’s onsite health care staff failed to offer help, to call an ambulance, or to notify her family.<sup>45</sup>

Around the country, some Amazon workers have also reported that AmCare plays a role in preventing workers from seeking proper medical care and documentation in order to thwart potential workers’ compensation claims when injuries have required significant time off work or prevented them from returning to work.<sup>46</sup>

Given accounts from Shakopee workers about inadequate care and problems reported in other parts of the country—including an OSHA inspection at an Amazon facility in New Jersey that revealed that AmCare employees were providing medical care beyond the first-aid treatment that they were qualified to offer—Minnesota OSHA should thoroughly investigate AmCare staffing and practices at Minnesota Amazon facilities to ensure that Amazon is not offering medical treatment from unqualified personnel or thwarting workers’ compensation claims.<sup>47</sup>

### ***Extreme temperatures and noise levels create hazards***

In addition to dangerous work-pace requirements, workers have reported lack of temperature control in facilities. As one worker said, “During summertime, we don’t get enough AC, in the winter we don’t get enough heat.”<sup>48</sup> Another current Shakopee worker said, “It’s too hot. They put in fans that don’t help. It’s always too hot.” Workers have reported health emergencies resulting from extreme heat.<sup>49</sup>

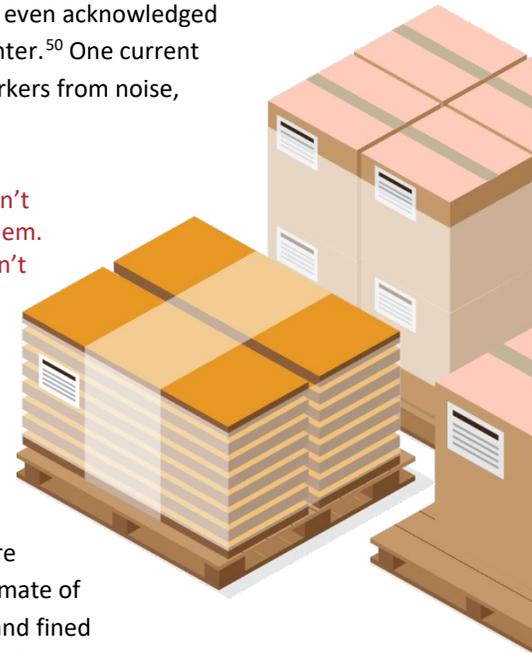
Workers have also reported extreme levels of noise. The high noise level is even acknowledged and referenced in postings for job openings at the Shakopee fulfillment center.<sup>50</sup> One current Shakopee worker described Amazon’s inadequate measures to protect workers from noise, saying:

“It’s very very noisy. They used to have earplugs, but I don’t know where they went. You need to walk miles to find them. They used to have them next to the bathroom but I haven’t seen them for a long time.”

### ***“Time off task”: Disciplinary policies and surveillance heighten workers’ fear, causing injuries and preventing workers from reporting health and safety concerns***

In addition to production quotas, other major drivers of high injury rates are Amazon’s disciplinary and surveillance practices, which foster a harmful climate of fear and uncertainty for workers. In May of 2021, Washington State cited and fined Amazon for occupational health hazards directly linked to its monitoring and disciplinary practices, stating, “[t]here is a direct connection between Amazon’s employee monitoring and discipline system and workplace musculoskeletal disorders.”<sup>51</sup>

One of the most harmful disciplinary policies is a practice that Amazon refers to as “Time Off Task” in which workers are tracked and penalized for every second they are not actively doing assigned tasks—for example, using the bathroom or washing their hands.



A current Amazon Shakopee worker, whom we will refer to as J., has a job that includes stowing items. He says:

“You gotta stow all day long. When you stop, your “Time Off Task” starts. If you’re dealing with a heavy product and are trying to adjust things, your rate goes off. You gotta have a lot of energy.”

J. says his hands go numb at the end of the day due to strain. He also describes the impact of the lack of breaks combined with the disciplinary policy.

“Bathrooms are so far away. You may need to walk a quarter mile to get to a bathroom. And you get an eight-minute break to go to bathroom, so you’re rushed. Maybe you can do it in eight minutes if you don’t wash your hands. If you have a stomach upset or anything there’s not enough time. If you want to take longer, you need to tell manager, but it’s difficult or impossible to find a manager.”

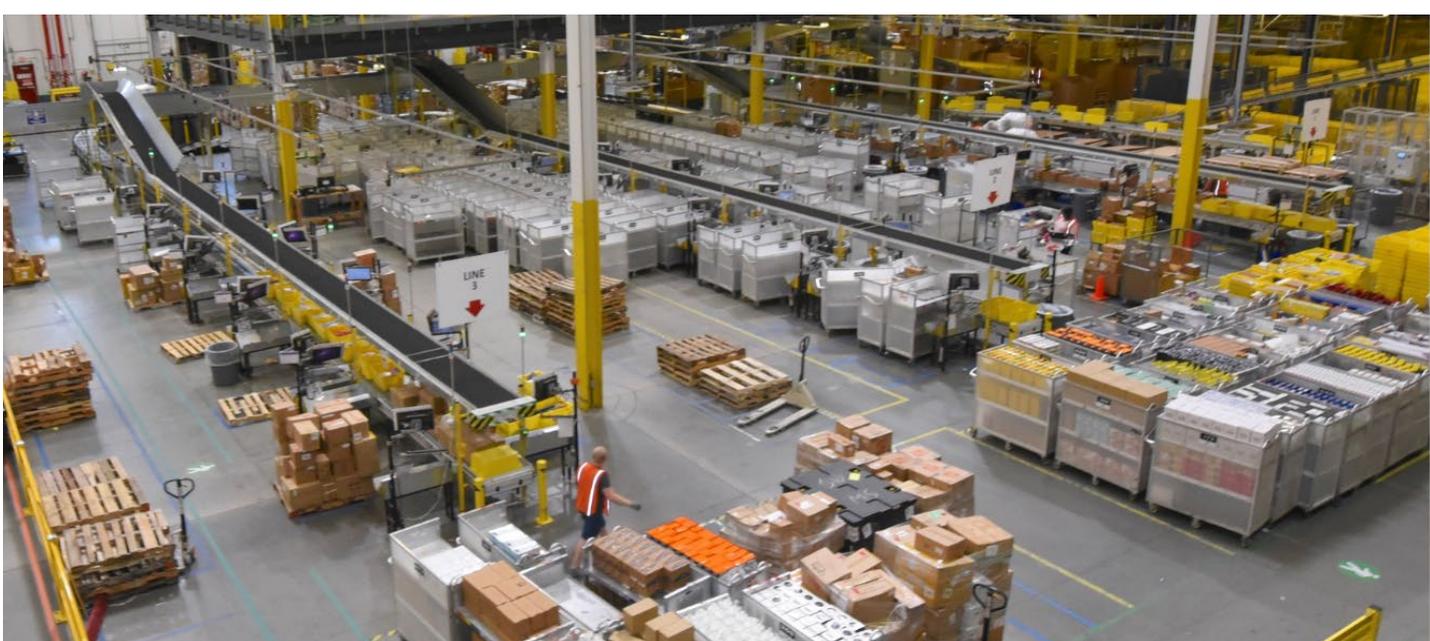
J. has worked at Amazon in Minnesota since 2017. He says, “If you don’t make the rate, they write you up. I got written up six times. For low productivity. Time off task.”

Jennifer Bates, who works at an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, describes in vivid detail how this practice affects workers’ day-to-day experience.

“It’s not just physically. It’s a mental strain on—I’m speaking for myself, but mentally, you have to think about even if I can go to the bathroom...You have to mentally think, I’m tired. Do I take the chance to walk way up there to get me something to eat?”

Her description shows how Amazon’s hostile and intensive electronic monitoring practices and disciplinary policies negatively impact both the physical and mental health of workers.

Moreover, Bates says that Amazon does not give workers clear guidelines on how the policy is enforced.



“I’ve seen them come take them off the line. You’ve racked up too much. What do you mean? Nobody told me anything about time off task. Because they don’t tell you that hey, you only got this amount of time off task a day. No one ever knew that it was a thing, until people started getting written up about it or getting fired up about it. And to this day, no one even knows what is the maximum time off task. Now is that written and given to us? Has management given it to us? We don’t have that.”

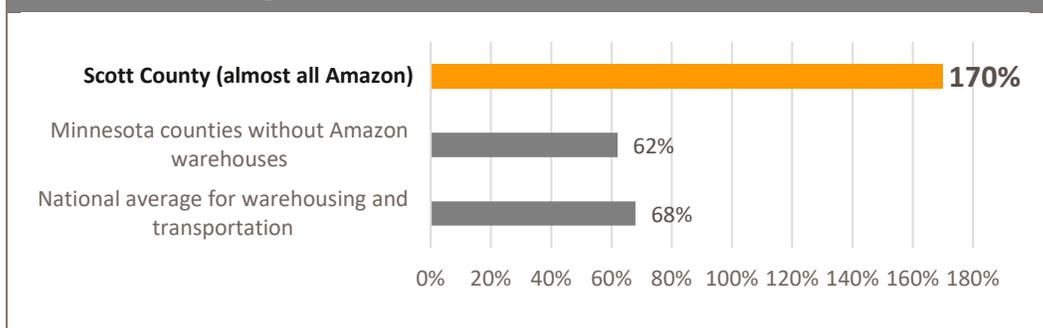
*New York Times* reporter Michael Corkery, who has spoken to Amazon workers around the country, corroborates Bates’ portrayal of the policy. “I’ve talked to a lot of other Amazon workers that are also confused by how the time off task policies work. Even Amazon, when I’ve asked them about it, their answers tend to be ambiguous. And it’s just led to a great deal of confusion and fear for some workers...about how this works.”<sup>52</sup>

## Triple-Digit Turnover Rates

Available public data on Scott County warehouses—where Amazon employs almost all warehouse workers—show stunningly high rates of turnover. Turnover in Scott County warehouses was 170 percent in 2018, according to the most recent available data. This suggests that for every job at the Shakopee Amazon facilities, almost two workers left or were let go from jobs there over the course of a year.<sup>53</sup>

These rates are more than double the turnover rates for warehouses nationally and for the rest of the warehouse industry in Minnesota (See **Figure 4** and **Table 1**). Turnover in Minnesota for warehouse workers in counties without Amazon warehouses was about 62 percent in 2018.<sup>54</sup> Scott County warehouse turnover rates are higher than both the average national turnover for workers in transportation and warehousing—68.8 percent—and average national turnover rates for retail and logistics.<sup>55</sup>

**Figure 4. Worker turnover at Scott County warehouses is more than double the national average**



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators. Data are from 2018, the latest data available that reflects Amazon’s presence in Scott County. National average is aggregated for transportation and warehousing. Note: The category “Minnesota counties without Amazon warehouses” includes the Minnesota counties in which warehouse employment averaged at least 95 employees annually.*

**Table 1. Scott County's warehouse turnover rates exceed those of all other Minnesota counties**

County	Average Annual Employment	Total Separations	Turnover
<b>Scott (mostly Amazon)</b>	<b>4,435</b>	<b>7,560</b>	<b>170.40%</b>
Hennepin	2,840	1,384	48.74%
Anoka	1,228	1,432	116.61%
Dakota	774	594	76.72%
Winona	698	166	23.77%
Ramsey	400	156	38.98%
Stearns	258	96	37.25%
Freeborn	116	36	31.03%
Washington	97	84	86.60%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2018. Note: This list includes the Minnesota counties in which warehouse employment averaged at least 95 employees annually.

Changes in turnover rate can be related to various factors, including business cycle fluctuations. However, the particularly high rate for this group of workers as compared to the rate for similar workers suggests that Amazon’s presence has had a unique impact.

Not only are the turnover rates in Shakopee high compared to other warehouses in Minnesota and elsewhere around the country, they are also exceedingly high compared to other Amazon facilities. A recent *New York Times* analysis of county-level census data revealed abnormally high turnover rates at Amazon’s facilities around the country: At roughly 150 percent a year, it was almost double that of the retail and logistics industries.<sup>56</sup> The fact that turnover rates at the Shakopee facilities exceed those documented at Amazon facilities elsewhere around the country—alongside the astronomically high injury rates in Shakopee—underscores the unsustainability of Amazon jobs for Minnesota workers, and the adverse consequences for workers’ families and communities.

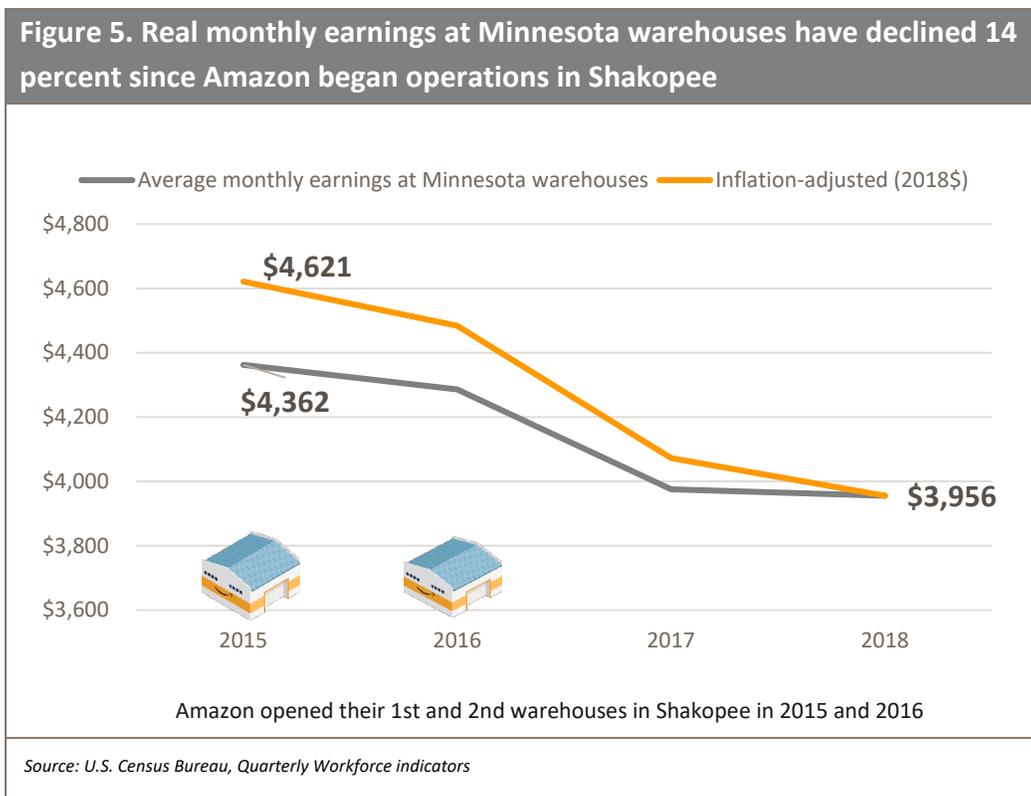
One of the driving factors of high turnover at these facilities is the fact that Amazon’s inhumane work pace doing repetitive tasks requires a level of physical exertion and strain that takes a high toll on workers’ physical health over time—which is why the company needs to constantly replenish its workforce. As J. says, “I personally know people with knee, back, shoulder, hand injuries. People have left the job because of injuries. They can’t go on.”

What emerges is a troubling picture of Amazon’s business model—one in which the company views its workers as disposable and designs its operations with no intention of creating jobs that people can stay in for the long-term. Instead of cultivating workers to stay with the company for many years, Amazon relies on a high-churn model that uses and discards workers without regard for the cost to their health or potential disruptions to their lives, their families, and their communities.

**Not only are the turnover rates in Shakopee high compared to other warehouses in Minnesota and elsewhere around the country, they are also exceedingly high compared to other Amazon facilities.**

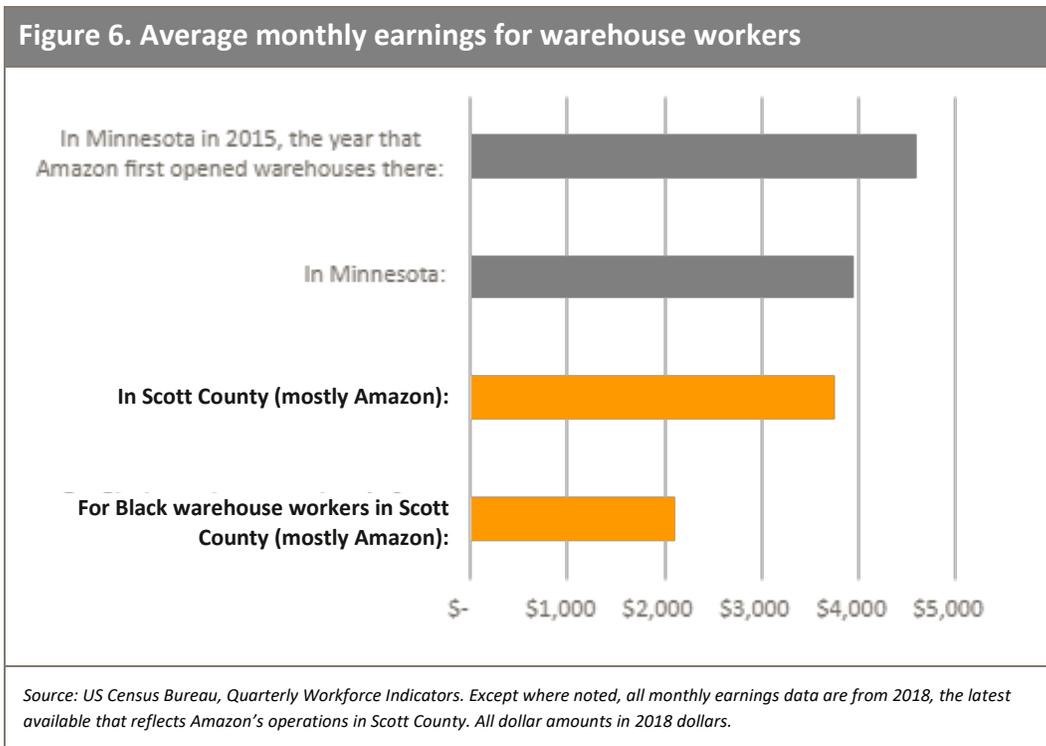
## Driving Warehouse Industry Wages Down in Minnesota

Amazon claims high rates of pay for its warehouse workers.<sup>57</sup> However, in reality, Amazon’s pay rates are below those of most warehouses in Minnesota, and Amazon’s low wages have measurably dragged average wage rates down for the entire warehouse industry in the state. The most recent Census data available show that Scott County warehouse workers (a large majority of whom are Amazon workers in Shakopee) earned on average \$3,757 per month in 2018, compared to the statewide average for warehouse workers (including Amazon) of \$3,956 per month. Compare this to the \$4,362 (the equivalent of \$4,621 in 2018 dollars) in monthly earnings for Minnesota warehouse workers on average in 2015, the year Amazon began operations in Shakopee—a 9 percent decline in wages. After adjusting for inflation, the effect is even more dramatic, representing a 14 percent decline in real wages and purchasing power in just three years.<sup>58</sup>



Amazon’s outsized presence and large-scale hiring may provide a modest bump to wages in low-wage industries in a local labor market area as it drives up competition for workers.<sup>59</sup> However, Amazon’s impact on local warehouse wages in particular—which have historically tended to be higher than the average wage—has been shown to be negative, not only in Minnesota but across the country. An analysis by *The Economist* recently found that in the two and a half years before the opening of a new Amazon warehouse facility, local warehouse wages increase by an average of 8 percent. In the two and half years after Amazon’s arrival, those wages fall by 3 percent. It also found that in places where Amazon operates, warehouse workers earn about 10 percent less than similar workers employed elsewhere.<sup>60</sup>

J., the Shakopee Amazon worker, shares his opinion on the compensation he receives for the high-intensity work he does at the Amazon warehouse: “For the money they’re making and the work I’m doing, I don’t make enough.” J’s full-time permanent job at Amazon doesn’t pay enough to make ends meet, so J. relies on publicly funded income support through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps).



## Exploiting Seasonal and Nonstandard Workers

Amazon utilizes nonstandard work arrangements—those that vary from permanent, direct-hire employment—at its Shakopee facility and in the delivery network that services it. Seasonal hiring, employment via labor intermediaries, and sham independent contracting practices allow Amazon to erode labor standards, shed employer accountability, and avoid paying for health insurance for a share of its workforce.

Amazon workers in nonstandard work arrangements—including those hired as “seasonal” in jobs that are perceived to be temporary, workers labelled independent contractors, and workers subcontracted to third-party delivery service providers—face practical and legal barriers to organizing collectively and bargaining with Amazon for better conditions.

As it does across the country, Amazon uses a temporary help and staffing agency called Integrity Staffing Solutions to source labor at its Shakopee facilities. In particular, the staffing agency supplies workers for the facilities’ large “seasonal” and on-demand “Ready” workforces.<sup>61</sup> Integrity Staffing Solutions maintains offices on Amazon’s Shakopee lot and in St. Paul—in one of the areas in the city with the highest concentrations of people of color.<sup>62</sup>

Within Amazon warehouses, seasonal and permanent workers work alongside each other, often completing the same tasks, in many cases differentiated only by the color of the badges they carry. Seasonal “white badge” workers suffer a wage and benefit penalty relative to their permanent “blue badge” counterparts.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Amazon’s overuse of “seasonal” hiring has created a two-tiered workforce within its warehouses. According to reports from a facility in Shakopee, seasonal workers receive fewer health benefits, less paid time off, and reduced access to promotions than do permanent workers.<sup>64</sup> And seasonal workers have reported being locked into temporary status for upwards of 10 months—this practice is known as “perma-temping”<sup>65</sup>—and have demanded their conversion to permanent employee status.<sup>66</sup>

As is the case across the United States, the trucking and last-mile delivery networks connected to the Shakopee fulfillment center are characterized by a range of work arrangements that erode labor standards for workers.

Last-mile delivery drivers working for the Amazon Flex digital labor platform are labelled “independent contractors” by Amazon, although they are not truly running a separate business, free from control by the corporation.<sup>67</sup> Hourly wage rates are a third to half of what unionized United Parcel Service and U.S. Postal Service workers earn.<sup>68</sup> Amazon Flex drivers across the

United States have sued Amazon for independent contractor misclassification and a host of labor violations including wage theft.<sup>69</sup>

Under Amazon’s Delivery Service Partner (DSP) program, the company subcontracts last-mile delivery work to small providers that deploy company-branded vans and (Amazon says solely) employ delivery drivers.<sup>70</sup> Amazon exerts a significant amount of control over the operations of its DSPs, tracking and surveilling drivers, and imposing demanding productivity standards that can lead to unsafe driving practices and accidents, from which the company attempts to indemnify itself.<sup>71</sup> According to a former manager for Amazon Logistics, “The DSP contract-labor model is absolutely to mitigate risk and not take on the cost and obligation to actually employ people.”<sup>72</sup>

Amazon, through its membership in the TechNet lobby group,<sup>73</sup> is a member of the Coalition for Workforce Innovation,<sup>74</sup> where it joins other Big Tech companies (via TechNet), members of the Retail Industry Leaders Association like Walmart,<sup>75</sup> digital labor platforms like Uber, and many more corporate giants in lobbying to transform more U.S. workers into non-employees, stripping them of federal labor protections.<sup>76</sup>



## Many Workers Infected with COVID-19 and Lacking Sick Leave

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Amazon workers have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis, often working mandatory overtime to provide essential distribution and delivery services in Minnesota as the company has seen a surge in business during the pandemic. Infection rates among workers at Amazon facilities were far higher than in the surrounding community. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, during a period of 70 days in the spring of 2020, about 1 in 12 Shakopee Amazon workers contracted the virus.<sup>77</sup> An internal Amazon memo showed that infections were nearly five times the rate of surrounding counties.<sup>78</sup>

Many Amazon workers are trapped between poverty and the risk of contracting COVID: “We’re all poor,” explained one Shakopee facility worker when describing why he and colleagues took overtime shifts during the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>79</sup>

During a period of 70 days in the spring of 2020, about 1 in 12 Shakopee Amazon workers contracted the virus.

When Shakopee workers raised concerns about the lack of protection against the spread of COVID-19 at the facilities, the company responded with retaliatory actions. For example, Bashir Mohamed had spent close to three years working nights at an Amazon warehouse in Shakopee when the pandemic struck. As reports of the spread of COVID-19 in the facility in March 2020 became more alarming, Mohamed grew concerned about his own and his fellow warehouse workers’ safety. Pre-pandemic, Mohamed had pushed for improved conditions at the warehouse. He came together with other workers to organize job actions, including walkouts and slowdowns. Now he began to warn his coworkers about the dangers of the virus, and to advocate for Amazon to implement better cleaning practices to mitigate the risk of contagion. He also expressed concern about the impossibility of maintaining social distancing at work. In April 2020, Amazon fired Mohamed.<sup>80</sup>

Amazon workers who contracted COVID found that the company did not provide adequate leave. One current worker, J., describes the lack of sick time: “I’ve worked in so many companies. When you don’t feel good, you take sick time. [Amazon] make[s] it ‘personal time.’ You have 40 hours the whole year for personal time.”<sup>81</sup>

Tyler Hamilton, another Amazon worker who believes he contracted COVID-19 while working at the Shakopee fulfillment center in 2020, described the devastating impact of inadequate paid leave:

“I was out of work for a month, the majority of that being unpaid. It’s tiring having to work hard to pay your bills—10-hour shifts, 12-hour shifts—only to be hit with something like getting sick and falling behind because we don’t have paid family medical leave or paid sick leave like we should.”<sup>82</sup>

## Other Costs to the Public and the State of Minnesota

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### ***Amazon breeds poverty in communities even as it profits from a government program that provides nutrition assistance to people living in poverty.***

A recent study of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reciprocity found that Amazon was a top employer of SNAP recipients in several states.<sup>83</sup> The State of Minnesota did not provide SNAP data for the study;<sup>84</sup> however, a full-time Amazon worker at the Shakopee facility reports that his family has had to rely on food stamps while working for Amazon. Amazon profits off of SNAP in Minnesota; it is one of a handful of large retailers that participate in a pilot program run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (the agency that administers SNAP) that allows SNAP users to buy groceries via Amazon's online platforms.<sup>85</sup>

### ***Amazon negotiated to have public money that could have gone to schools and libraries diverted to improvements to roads and highways feeding its Shakopee facilities.***

Prior to the construction of its Shakopee sortation and fulfillment centers, Amazon negotiated with Shakopee and Scott County for \$5.7 million worth of road-widening and other improvements.<sup>86</sup> The funding came from local and county public funds that typically resource schools and libraries.<sup>87</sup>

The City of Shakopee and Scott County have seen their road maintenance budgets swell since Amazon's arrival, due to increased truck, van, and car traffic.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Air pollution generated by vehicular traffic around Amazon facilities harms the health of Shakopee residents and contributes to climate change.***

In addition to road wear-and-tear, as described above, vehicles that service Amazon's Shakopee facilities emit air pollutants that are harmful to the health of Shakopee residents, who are disproportionately Black, Latinx, and Asian.<sup>89</sup> Vehicular pollution can cause asthma and bring on asthma attacks—attacks that kill Black Minnesotans at four times and Asian Minnesotans at two times the rate of their white counterparts.<sup>90</sup> Like elsewhere in the country, Amazon's operations in Minnesota exacerbate environmental injustice.<sup>91</sup>

Amazon corporate employees have recognized the environmental justice issues created by Amazon's logistics network. In May 2021, a group of corporate employees organized under the moniker Amazon Employees for Climate Justice signed a petition urging the company to clean up its fleet and address its disproportionate environmental impact on communities of color. "As employees, we are alarmed that Amazon's pollution is disproportionately concentrated in communities of color," the petition stated, and called on Amazon to be a company that "lives up to its statements about racial equity."<sup>92</sup>

### ***Amazon has contributed to the decline of competing retailers in Minnesota.***

Years before the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered storefronts in the state, Minnesota experienced a surge in retail layoffs. Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis official Ron Wirtz attributes much of the retail employment loss to Amazon and its e-commerce model.<sup>93</sup> As Amazon gained its foothold in Minnesota after 2016, brick-and-mortar retail layoffs increased. Between



2017 and 2018, retail layoffs rose from 14 percent to 27 percent of all the state’s layoffs.<sup>94</sup> And predatory pricing by Amazon, aided by the decision not to collect state sales tax on third-party sales, helped to lure shoppers. For years, Amazon and other online retailers did not charge state sales taxes on goods from third-party sellers—which comprised 58 percent of Amazon’s sales in 2018.<sup>95</sup> Amazon began collecting Minnesota state sales tax on goods from third-party sellers to Minnesota consumers at the end of 2018 after a Supreme Court ruling required it to do so.<sup>96</sup>

In 2022, Amazon will be using the Twin Cities as a test site for its “Amazon Fresh” grocery stores. The company plans to open three of the stores in the Twin Cities, home to a packed, competitive grocery market. Amazon Fresh’s use of labor-displacing technology like cashier-less and automated (no customer scanning required) checkout in its stores and a delivery model that relies on low-paid independent contractors will put pressure on incumbent grocers and their workers, a large share of whom are union members.<sup>97</sup>



Source: Fibonacci Blue

## Conclusion and Recommendations

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As Amazon expands rapidly in Minnesota, the state government must take decisive action to address the problems identified in this report, including hazardous work conditions, racial inequities, and under-compensation. Amazon has increased its lobbying activity significantly in Minnesota in recent years, with at least seven active lobbyists in the state between 2020 and 2021.<sup>98</sup> In the last decade, Amazon spent well over half a million dollars on lobbying in Minnesota, on issues related to employment policy, workforce development, privacy protections, and taxes.<sup>99</sup>

As Amazon grows its physical presence and political influence in Minnesota, state lawmakers and regulators should consider the following recommendations to address the needs of workers and communities that have been adversely affected by the company's operations. Amazon itself must also take immediate steps to address ongoing problems.



### 1. Convene public hearings on Amazon's presence in Minnesota.

The Minnesota Legislature must convene hearings as soon as possible on Amazon's role as an employer and corporate citizen in Minnesota, giving the public an opportunity to share their experiences as workers, neighbors, small business owners, customers, competitors, and suppliers of Amazon.



### 2. Launch wall-to-wall MNOSHA investigation of Amazon facilities.

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) must conduct a wall-to-wall inspection of Amazon's Minnesota warehouse facilities to investigate the cause of the high rates and large numbers of work-related musculoskeletal injuries. The investigation should focus on the ergonomic risk factors involved in all manual material handling jobs (including, but not limited to, repetitive motions, lifting, carrying, pulling, pushing, and twisting). Further, the investigation must include—as did Washington State OSHA's investigation of an Amazon warehouse—the role of management practices such as quotas, the relentless work pace, and surveillance and discipline policies in causing the stunningly high rates of musculoskeletal and other injuries.<sup>100</sup> Regulators should require that Amazon directly address the ergonomics risk factors that lead to worker injuries, including ensuring that the company hire one or more ergonomists to conduct a detailed ergonomic analysis of all jobs at all Amazon facilities in the Twin Cities, and implement measures to abate and materially reduce all hazardous exposure in the workplace.<sup>101</sup>



### 3. Investigate and overhaul AmCare.

The state must also investigate AmCare, and whether the persons providing first aid are doing so within their legal scope of practice. In addition, MNOSHA should determine whether any delay in medical referrals causes worker injuries and illnesses to become more severe.<sup>102</sup> Regulators should also work with Amazon to establish and recognize worker health and safety committees to obtain a wide range of worker input into job hazards and concerns about AmCare. Finally, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry or the Minnesota Attorney General should take steps to ensure that Amazon and AmCare are providing workers injured on the job with the proper and timely documentation needed to file workers' compensation claims.



**4. Ban “Time Off Task,” mandate breaks, and set reasonable and transparent workpace standards in the warehouse industry.**

Minnesota lawmakers must also adopt legislation, similar to that recently passed in California, to protect warehouse workers by limiting “Time Off Task” practices, requiring employers to disclose productivity quotas to employees and government agencies, and prohibiting employers from requiring warehouse employees to meet unsafe quotas or quotas that would require them to skip designated meal and rest breaks.<sup>103</sup>



**5. Establish fairness and transparency in discipline and termination practices through just-cause job protections.**

Amazon uses ever-shifting and non-transparent metrics to discipline and terminate workers, causing both physical injury and psychological stress. As one former Amazon warehouse worker said, “Managers are always vague about what will get you fired, which creates this paranoia. [If employees ask questions about] “what exactly will get them fired...the responses are so vague that you basically know that if you’re not constantly moving, you’re probably gone.”<sup>104</sup> To address this lack of transparency, Minnesota must adopt just-cause job protections to establish a basic framework for fairness in discipline and termination.<sup>105</sup>



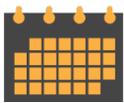
**6. Regulate workplace electronic monitoring.**

While information from workplace electronic monitoring technologies may have appropriate uses for improving other aspects of business operations, Minnesota lawmakers must prohibit employers from making termination and disciplinary actions based on automated decision-making or data collected through electronic monitoring.<sup>106</sup>



**7. Investigate and address occupational segregation and racial inequity.**

Minnesota lawmakers must require Amazon to report detailed demographic, occupational, earnings, and job tenure information—including for seasonal and subcontracted workers—and commit to a plan to improve racial equity in its workplace practices including hiring, promotion, training, and compensation. Public officials should work with Amazon to ensure that all work-related training and communication is language-accessible to all workers.



**8. Combat abuse of contract and seasonal workers.**

Minnesota lawmakers must establish parity standards for subcontracted and direct-hire workers, ensure that Amazon is liable for job conditions under its control, and provide more universal access to labor protections.

Minnesota lawmakers must ensure that Amazon cannot erode labor standards for its workforce through the use of seasonal hiring, labor intermediaries, and independent contracting. Wage and benefit parity standards must be established for direct-hire and subcontracted workers. A clear “joint employer” standard, following California’s AB 1897,<sup>107</sup> would ensure that Amazon cannot evade responsibility for employees over whom it exerts significant control. The state must prohibit Amazon from monitoring and subjecting to productivity standards

workers who are not its direct employees. Establishing an “ABC” test<sup>108</sup> to determine which workers are covered by the full slate of the state’s labor laws will combat independent contractor misclassification by Amazon. And to combat “perma-temping,” Amazon must commit to directly hire workers at three months tenure.



**9. Require employer reporting on publicly funded health insurance programs.**

Minnesota should require annual reporting on the number of Medical Assistance and Minnesota Cares recipients working at Amazon and other companies, similar to reporting that other states require. For example, Massachusetts requires that the state compile and publish an annual report of employers in the state with workers (or their dependents) enrolled in state healthcare programs and the number of such workers from each employer.



**10. Obtain quality employer-provided health insurance for all Amazon workers, including seasonal and nonstandard workers.**

The State of Minnesota should work with Amazon to extend quality employer-sponsored health insurance coverage to all seasonal and nonstandard Amazon workers.



**11. Strengthen the Workers’ Compensation Law.**

The Minnesota legislature must amend the Workers’ Compensation Law to ensure that the exercise of any right afforded by the act—including testifying in a hearing—is protected from retaliatory termination and discrimination. Currently, the law only protects workers from being terminated for filing a workers’ compensation claim.



**12. Leverage Minnesota pension investments in Amazon to obtain job quality improvements for Minnesota Amazon workers.**

The Minnesota State Board of Investment (SBI) manages the retirement funds for state and municipal employees and teachers in Minnesota. The Minnesota SBI owns 427,855 shares in Amazon (currently worth \$1.4 billion) and also holds \$74.2 million in Amazon’s bonds, according to its December 31, 2020 report.<sup>109</sup> The SBI could use its power as a shareholder to push for more transparency from the company about its employment practices and working conditions for its workers, and draw attention to the risks to shareholder value posed by poor working conditions, as California’s public employee pension fund, CalPERS, has done. Recently, CalPERS has supported Amazon shareholder proposals for a median gender and racial pay equity report and for a human rights impact assessment to address hazardous working conditions.<sup>110</sup>

## Methodological Note

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The injury rates cited in the report refer to the following Minnesota Amazon warehouses: MSP1, MSP5, MSP9, DMP1, CMN1, and HMS1. The wage and demographic figures in this report refer only to Amazon’s Shakopee warehouses, MSP1 and MSP5. We used county-level Quarterly Workforce Indicator data from Scott County, Minnesota to estimate workforce statistics for Amazon’s facilities in Shakopee. Given that Amazon does not disclose establishment-level data on demographics, wages, or turnover, QWI data from Scott County are the next best thing and represent a very close approximation of data for Amazon’s Shakopee facilities. Historical data from this source show almost no warehouse employment in Scott County before Amazon arrived in Shakopee in 2015.

## Acknowledgements

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# Appendix 1: OSHA 300 Log from Shakopee Fulfillment Center

OSHA's Form 300A

## Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses

Year 2018



U.S. Department of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

All establishments covered by Part 1904 must complete this Summary page, even if no work-related injuries or illnesses occurred during the year. Remember to review the Log to verify that the entries are complete and accurate before completing this summary.

Using the Log, count the individual entries you made for each category. Then write the totals below, making sure you have added the entries from every page of the Log. If you had no cases, write "0."

Employees, former employees, and their representatives have the right to review the OSHA Form 300 in its entirety. They also have limited access to the OSHA Form 301 or its equivalent. See 29 CFR Part 1904.35, in OSHA's recordkeeping rule, for further details on the access provisions for these forms.

### Number of Cases

Total number of deaths	Total number of cases with days away from work	Total number of cases with job transfer or restriction	Total number of other recordable cases
<u>0</u>	<u>177</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>49</u>
(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)

### Number of Days

Total number of days away from work	Total number of days of Job Transfer or Restriction
<u>8319</u>	<u>6872</u>
(K)	(L)

### Injury and Illness Types

Total number of...			
(M)			
(1) Injuries	<u>267</u>	(4) Poisonings	<u>0</u>
(2) Skin disorders	<u>0</u>	(5) Hearing Loss	<u>0</u>
(3) Respiratory condition	<u>0</u>	(6) All other illnesses	<u>3</u>

Post this Summary page from February 1 to April 30 of the year following the year covered by the form.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 50 minutes per response, including time to review the instructions, search and gather the data needed, and complete and review the collection of information. Persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. If you have any comments about these estimates or any other aspects of this data collection, contact: US Department of Labor, OSHA Office of Statistics, Room N-3644, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210. Do not send the completed forms to this office.

### Establishment Information

Your establishment name MSP1

Company Name Amazon.com.nvdc LLC

Street 2601 4th Ave East

City Shakopee State Minnesota ZIP 55379

Industry description (e.g. *Manufacture of motor truck trailers*)

General Warehousing and Storage

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC), if known (e.g. *SIC 3715*)

OR

North American Industrial Classification (NAICS), if known (e.g., 336212)

493110

### Employment Information

Annual average number of employees 0

Total hours worked by all employees last year 3,450,132

### Sign here

Knowingly falsifying this document may result in a fine.

I certify that I have examined this document and that to the best of my knowledge the entries are true, accurate, and complete.

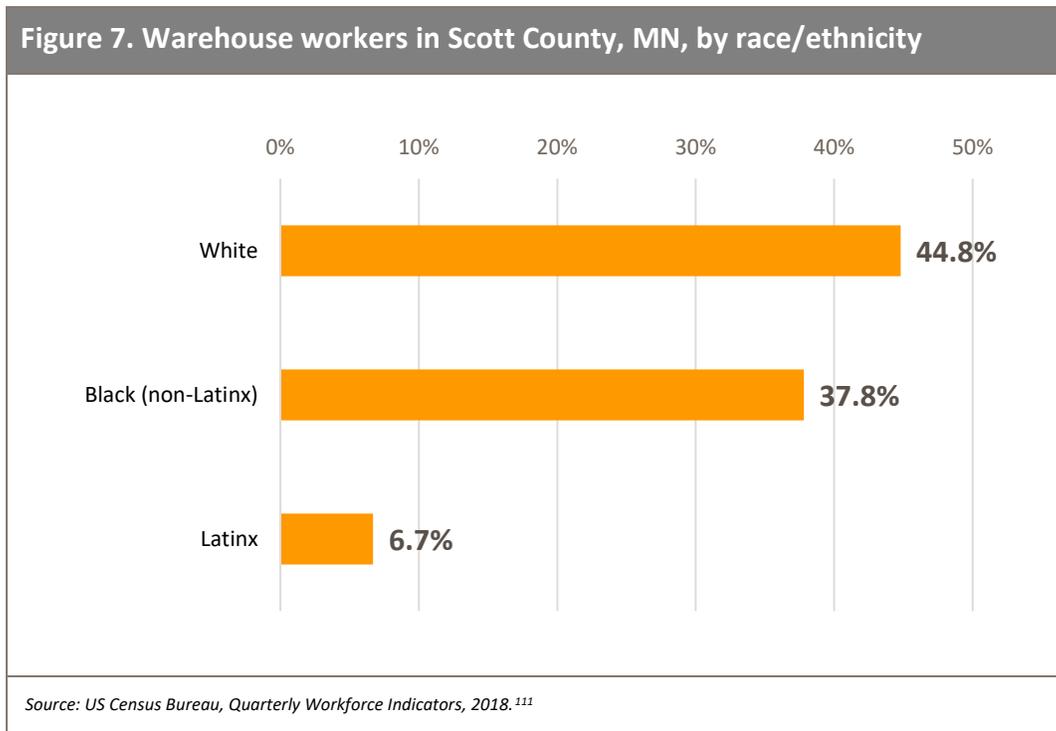
\_\_\_\_\_  
Company Executive Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Date

# Amazon Confidential

## Appendix 2: Warehouse Workers in Scott County, Minnesota, by Race/Ethnicity

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## Appendix 3: Recent Job Posting on Indeed.com for Amazon Warehouse Worker in Shakopee

### Warehouse Worker - Amazon - Shakopee ×

Amazon Workforce Staffing ★★★★★ 69,812 reviews  
Saint Paul, MN 55104

[Apply On Company Site](#)

#### Job details

**Salary**  
\$15.75 - \$16.75 an hour

#### Full Job Description

**Location:** 5825 11th Ave E, Shakopee, MN 55379 - MSP5 Sortation Center

**Hourly Pay Rate: \$15.75-\$16.75**  
**Shifts: 3am-7am, 830am-1230pm, 2pm-6pm, 830pm-1230am, 11pm-3am.** \*\*Shift end time may be extended up to 1 hr. Shift availability is dependent on current needs and may vary week to week.

Amazon remains open as an essential business to serve our communities delivering critical supplies directly to the doorsteps of people who need them. Find out what Amazon is doing to provide a safe environment for employees at this time on our COVID-19 FAQ page.

You're on your way to joining the dedicated team that gets orders ready for customers. Enjoy the flexibility of picking your own schedule while earning a reliable pay rate. Stay active during your work day in this fast-paced warehouse environment. Learn new skills and build your experience by doing a range of different types of work. Candidates must be 18 years or older with the ability to read and speak English for safety purposes.

**Duties and responsibilities:**

- Sort, scan, stack packages on pallets
- Get customer orders ready for delivery
- Use technology like scanners, computers, and handheld printers

These duties will rotate on a daily basis.

**Shift details:**  
This role puts you in control of your schedule. Choose the shifts that work best for you now. You will be able to adjust your schedule in the future, as needed.

- Work about 16-24 hours each week
- Shifts are 3 – 5 hours long
- Choose to work more shifts when available - depends on business needs

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Amazon.com, Inc. “Amazon Confirms Fulfillment Center in Shakopee Creating More than 1000 Full-Time Jobs.” June 18, 2015. Accessed October 5, 2021. <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20150618006389/en/Amazon-Confirms-Fulfillment-Center-in-Shakopee-Creating-More-than-1000-Full-Time-Jobs>
- <sup>2</sup> This report addresses six Amazon warehousing facilities in Minnesota: MSP1, MSP5, MSP9, DMP1, CMN1, and HMS1.
- <sup>3</sup> Occupational Health and Safety Administration “Establishment Specific Injury and Illness Data.” Accessed November 29, 2021. <https://www.osha.gov/Establishment-Specific-Injury-and-Illness-Data>. These figures refer to all cases requiring medical treatment, including serious cases that require transfer to light duty or days of missed work.
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- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2018. See Methodological Note for more information.
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2018.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2018.
- <sup>8</sup> 2018 is the latest year of data available from the Census Bureau’s Quarterly Workforce Indicators for Scott County, Minnesota that reflects Amazon’s presence in that county. Beginning with the 2019 QWI data, data reported for Scott County show less than a hundred warehouse employees, suggesting that those data do not reflect Amazon’s workforce in the county. This may be a result of the Census Bureau’s confidentiality policies or it may be a result of changes in Amazon’s reporting practices.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2018.
- <sup>10</sup> See section in report starting on page 20.
- <sup>11</sup> See section in report starting on page 20.
- <sup>12</sup> Tung, Irene and Debbie Berkowitz. “Amazon’s Disposable Workers: High Injury and Turnover Rates at Fulfillment Centers in California.” National Employment Law Project. March 2020. Accessed October 5, 2021. <https://www.nelp.org/publication/amazons-disposable-workers-high-injury-turnover-rates-fulfillment-centers-california/>
- <sup>13</sup> Long, Katherine Ann and Will Evans. “Amazon’s relentless pace is injuring warehouse workers and violating the law, Washington state regulator says.” Seattle Times. May 25, 2021.
- <sup>14</sup> In the period immediately after the Shakopee warehouses opened, from 2017 to 2019, Amazon’s profits grew rapidly, totaling roughly \$24.7 billion, which were the highest profits in its history. Since the pandemic Amazon’s profits have grown even more dramatically. See Owens, Jeremy. Amazon’s pandemic profits top previous 3 years of earnings. Market Watch. April 29, 2021. Accessed October 5, 2021. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/amazon-has-made-as-much-profit-during-pandemic-as-previous-three-years-of-earnings-in-total-11619726844>; and Amazon’s Profit Tripled in First Quarter, *New York Times*, April 21, 2021. Accessed October 5, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/04/29/business/stock-market-today>
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- <sup>16</sup> NELP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2018.
- <sup>17</sup> Amazon.com, Inc. 2015.  
<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20150618006389/en/Amazon-Confirms-Fulfillment-Center-in-Shakopee-Creating-More-than-1000-Full-Time-Jobs>
- <sup>18</sup> NELP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators. Beyond workers employed at these distribution facilities, Amazon's workforce (both directly and indirectly employed)—also includes long-haul truck drivers, Amazon fulfillment center warehouse workers, last-mile delivery van drivers and Flex drivers and many thousands more are connected to its supply chain via contracting relationships. For the purposes of this report, we focus primarily on the fulfillment center and sortation center, but we briefly touch on issues relating to drivers in the section titled, "Exploiting Seasonal and Nonstandard Workers," beginning on page 17.
- <sup>19</sup> US Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators. See Methodological Note below for more information. For the purposes of this report, "Black" refers to Black workers.
- <sup>20</sup> Bruder, Jessica. "Meet the Immigrants Who Took on Amazon." *Wired*. November 12, 2018.  
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