



Warehousing Pain: Amazon Worker Injury Rate Skyrockets with Company's Rapid Expansion in New York State

May | 2022



Warehousing Pain: Amazon Worker Injury Rate Skyrockets with Company's Rapid Expansion in New York State

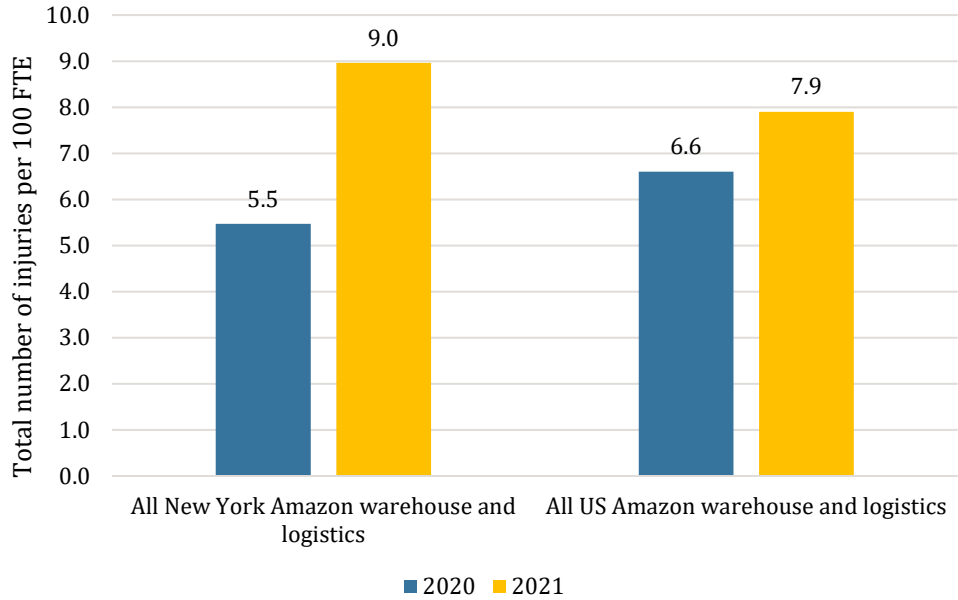
*64 Percent Increase in Injuries Reported as Amazon Doubles the
Number of Facilities in the State Since January 2021*

Key Findings

An analysis of newly released data from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration shows:

- **Massive increase in worker injuries** - An analysis based on Amazon's self-reported data reveals that injury rates jumped 64 percent at the company's warehouse and logistics facilities in New York State from 2020 to 2021.¹ The rate increased from 5.5 injuries per 100 full-time equivalent workers (FTEs) in 2020 to 9.0 injuries per 100 FTEs in 2021. Nationally, Amazon injury rates increased 20 percent (6.6 to 7.9 injuries per 100 FTEs) during the same period, as a recent Strategic Organizing Center analysis shows.² Since January 2021, Amazon has expanded rapidly in New York, more than doubling the number of facilities in the state for a current total of 69.³ In late 2020, Amazon reinstated electronic monitoring-based disciplinary policies that had been suspended at the beginning of the pandemic, driving up the pace of work and likely resulting in more worker injuries.⁴ Amazon's 2021 total injury rate in New York (9.0 per 100 FTEs) is approximately equivalent to one injury for every 11 full-time workers.
- **Overwhelming majority of injuries were of the most serious kind.** Eighty-nine percent of injuries reported were cases so serious that workers could not continue performing their normal job duties and had to either change job duties or take time off work to recover.
- **The rate for the most serious injuries at Amazon facilities is 40 percent higher than at non-Amazon facilities.** In 2021, the total injury rate at Amazon warehousing and logistics facilities in New York State (9.0 per 100 FTEs) was 29 percent higher than at non-Amazon facilities (7.0 per 100 FTEs). The rate of the most serious injuries at Amazon warehousing and logistics facilities (8.0 per 100 FTEs) was 40 percent higher than at non-Amazon facilities in the state (5.7 per 100 FTEs).
- **New York injury rate surges past the national Amazon average.** In 2020, rates of the most serious injuries and total injury rates for New York Amazon warehouse and logistics workers were lower than the national Amazon averages, but in 2021 both measures surpassed those averages (**see Figure 1**). The rate of the most serious injuries for New York Amazon warehouse and logistics workers (8.0 per 100 FTEs) is 18 percent higher than the Amazon national average for that measure (6.8 per 100 FTEs). Similarly, the total injury rate for New York Amazon warehouse and logistics workers (9.0 per 100 FTEs) is 14 percent higher than the Amazon national average for total injuries (7.9 per 100 FTEs).

Figure 1. Amazon Worker Injury Rates Rose 64 percent in New York State from 2020 to 2021



Sources: Occupational Health and Safety Administration Injury Tracking Application; Strategic Organizing Center, "The Injury Machine," 2022.

- **Controversial upstate fulfillment center ranked first in the rate of most serious injuries among Amazon facilities in New York.** The three facilities that ranked the highest for rates of the most serious injuries among Amazon facilities in New York were ALB1 in Schodack/Castleton-on-Hudson (Rensselaer County), DRO2 in Greece (Erie County), and DBU1 in Tonawanda (Monroe County) (see Table 1). The Schodack/Castleton-on-Hudson facility reported a rate of 19.8 injuries of the most serious kind per 100 full-time equivalent workers, approximately equivalent to a stunning rate of one injury for every five full-time workers resulting in lost time or restricted duty. The facility was the first fulfillment center that Amazon built upstate and faced significant local opposition before it opened in 2020.⁵

Table 1. NYS Amazon Warehouse and Logistics Facilities Ranked by Rate of the Most Serious Injuries

Rank,Rate of the Most Serious Injuries	Facility Name	Location	Employment	Total Hours Worked	Most Serious Injuries, Count	Most Serious Injuries Per 100 FTEs	Total Injuries, Count	Total Injuries Per 100 FTEs
1	ALB1	Schodack/ Castleton-on-Hudson	951	1,901,194	188	19.8	212	22.3
2	DRO2	Greece	112	94,545	7	14.8	7	14.8
3	DBU1	Tonawanda	248	474,514	35	14.8	37	15.6
4	DYO1	New Windsor	192	340,411	25	14.7	25	14.7
5	DAB8	Shirley	185	356,964	23	12.9	27	15.1
6	DYY5	Bronx	107	186,253	12	12.9	15	16.1
7	DRO1	Rochester	261	379,936	24	12.6	31	16.3
8	DBU3	Carle Place	134	249,249	15	12.0	24	19.3
9	DYY6	Staten Island	384	652,343	33	10.1	41	12.6
10	DNY4	Bethpage	632	1,088,094	48	8.8	58	10.7
11	DAB4	Florida	78	140,252	6	8.6	8	11.4
12	DBU2	Dewitt	134	196,134	8	8.2	12	12.2
13	DYO2	Bronx	102	191,882	7	7.3	10	10.4
14	DYX2	Staten Island	176	390,423	13	6.7	17	8.7
15	SWF1	Montgomery	450	900,442	29	6.4	29	6.4
16	JFK8	Staten Island	5,050	10,099,991	304	6.0	309	6.1
17	DNJ3	New York	310	564,137	15	5.3	20	7.1
18	DYY4	Brooklyn	91	114,010	3	5.3	3	5.3
19	LDJ5	Staten Island	405	810,919	20	4.9	24	5.9
20	DBK1	Woodside	320	502,328	12	4.8	17	6.8
21	BUF5	Lancaster	1,379	1,434,386	32	4.5	34	4.7
22	DXY4	Blauvelt	104	196,314	4	4.1	5	5.1
23	ZYO1	Long Island City	37	64,478	1	3.1	3	9.3
24	DBK6	Brooklyn	80	173,629	1	1.2	1	1.2
25	HNY3	Emsford	35	21,350	0	0.0	0	0.0
26	HNY2	Maspeth	87	34,975	0	0.0	0	0.0
27	HSY1	East Syracuse	26	18,176	0	0.0	0	0.0
28	SYR1	Clay	64	30,862	0	0.0	0	0.0
29	HRO1	Rochester	29	17,803	0	0.0	0	0.0
All Amazon Facilities in New York					865	8.0	969	9.0

Source: OSHA Injury Tracking Application Establishment Data, 2021. Table does not include all Amazon facilities in New York, only those for which Amazon disclosed injury data for 2021 as of publication. Injury rates reported in this table refer to the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time equivalent (FTE) annual employees. OSHA assumes that 2,000 employee-hours equals one full-time annual employee (FTE). "Serious injury" refers to injuries and illnesses that require days away from work or days with job transfer or restriction. Note that the fewer the number of employees working at a facility, the greater the effect that a single case has on that facility's injury rates. Please refer to Methodological Note in Appendix.

Warehousing Jobs Are the Fastest-Growing in New York State—and the Most Dangerous for Workers

- The rise of e-commerce has led to rapid growth of employment in the warehousing and storage industry in New York State, which has more than doubled since 2010, increasing 131 percent (**see Figure 2a**). During the same period, the couriers and messengers industry also grew 74 percent (**see Figure 2b**).⁶
- Growth in both industries has accelerated rapidly in New York State since 2019. From 2019 to 2021, 13,074 jobs were added in the warehousing and storage industry (37 percent increase), and 15,514 jobs were added to the couriers and messengers industry (38 percent increase) in New York State. During the same period, private-sector employment shrank 11 percent statewide.⁷
- The New York State Department of Labor projects that the warehouse industry will grow faster than any other industry in the state between 2018 and 2028.⁸
- New Yorkers working in these two industries that have powered the growth of e-commerce—warehousing, and couriers and messengers—experience work-related injuries and illnesses of the most serious kind at more than three times the average rate for private industry in the state.⁹ These industries rank as two of the most dangerous private-sector industries in New York State for workers (**see Figure 3**).¹⁰

Recommendations

New York State lawmakers should pass the Warehouse Worker Protection Act (WWPA) ([S8922/A10020](#)), sponsored by Senator Jessica Ramos and Assemblymember Latoya Joyner, which would update regulatory standards to protect workers in the rapidly growing warehousing and logistics sectors. California recently enacted a similar law that went into effect on January 1, 2022.¹¹

Covering warehousing and logistics firms that employ at least 50 workers in one facility or more than 500 workers in New York State, the WWPA will help stop the rising wave of warehouse workplace injuries in four key ways. The proposed Act would:

1. **Require transparency in work quotas** to help reduce the risk of worker injuries and prevent employers from disciplining workers if they fail to meet a quota for either taking needed rest periods and bathroom breaks or complying with other health and safety laws.
2. **Create an injury reduction program** that requires expert evaluation of each large warehouse for potential risks of musculoskeletal disorders—the most frequent type of serious, disabling injury in the warehousing industry.
3. **Establish a private right of action** to allow employees to directly enforce their rights under the Act.
4. **Grant the New York State Department of Labor additional powers** to ensure that the law is effectively enforced, including establishing a pool of qualified experts to do on-site evaluations.

Methodological Note

The data used to calculate total injury rates and serious injury rates in this brief are collected by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration through its Injury Tracking Application. Injury rates are computed from the following formula: $(\text{Number of injuries and illnesses} \times 200,000) / \text{Employee hours worked} = \text{Injury rate}$.

While we report rates for individual facilities in Table 1 in order to provide the reader with as much of the available data as possible, caution should be used when interpreting, citing and comparing injury rates for the facilities listed in Table 1. The fewer the employees working at a facility, the greater the effect of a single injury on incidence rates. Therefore, the incidence rates for smaller facilities may not be as reliable an indicator as they are at larger facilities.¹² The aggregate rate for the entire state and rates for larger facilities provide more reliable measures.

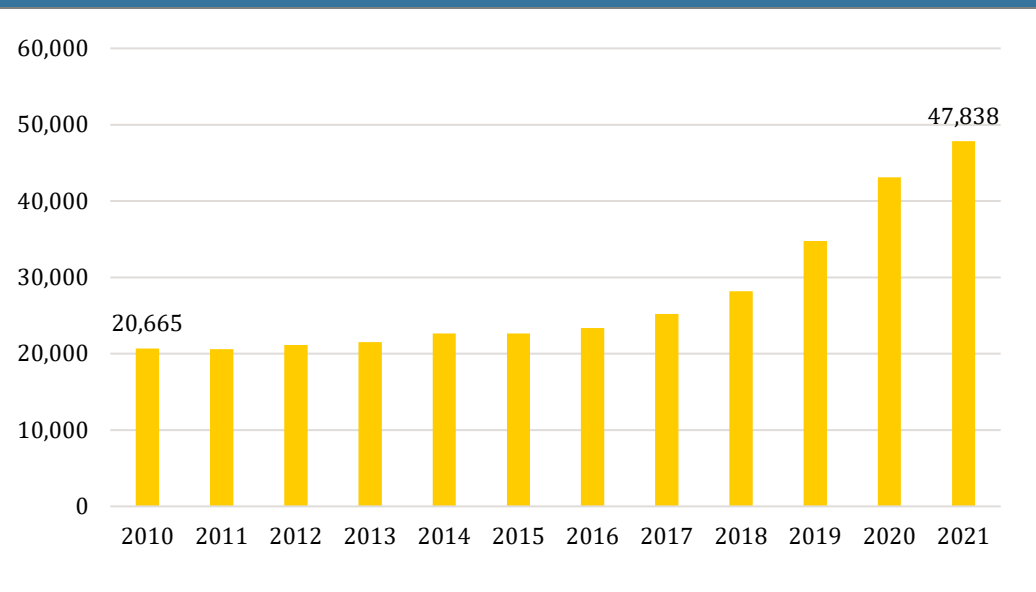
Our use of the term “injuries” includes both cases reported as “injuries” and work-related “illnesses.” These work-related “illnesses” (including heat-related conditions, skin diseases, respiratory conditions, and poisoning and other conditions) account for less than 5 percent of cases in the period covered by this analysis. All of the injuries that are recorded by Amazon and reported to OSHA are serious enough to require medical care. These are included in what we refer to as the total injury rate. We use the term “the most serious injuries” and “injuries of the most serious kind” to refer to injuries that not only require medical care but also require time off work or job restriction.

The term “warehousing and logistics facilities” refers to establishments that fall under the following NAICS codes: 492110, 493110, 493110, 493120, 493130, and 493190.



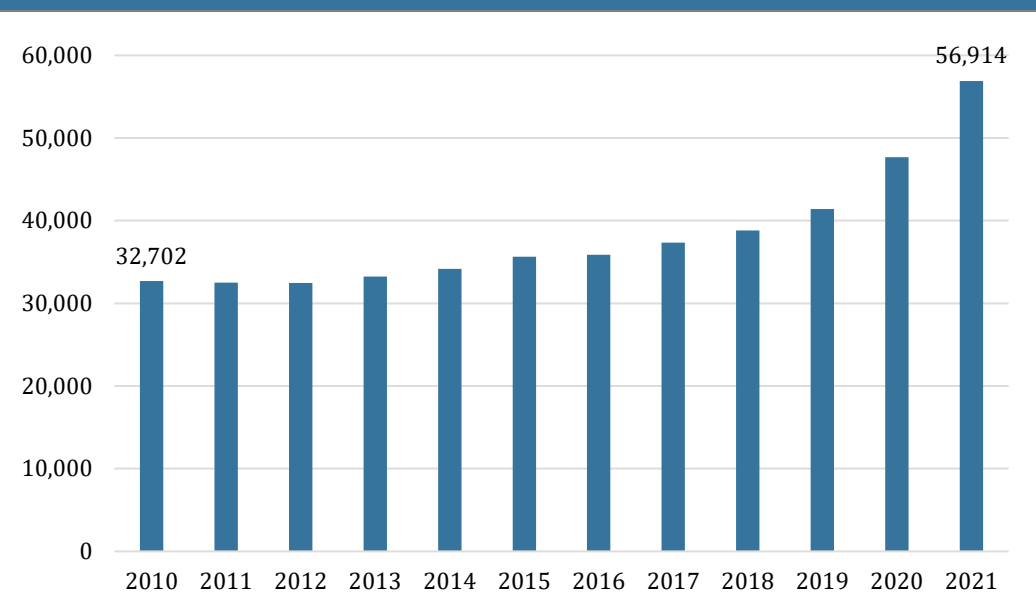
Appendix

Figure 2a. NYS Employment in the 'Warehousing and Storage' Industry, 2010-2021



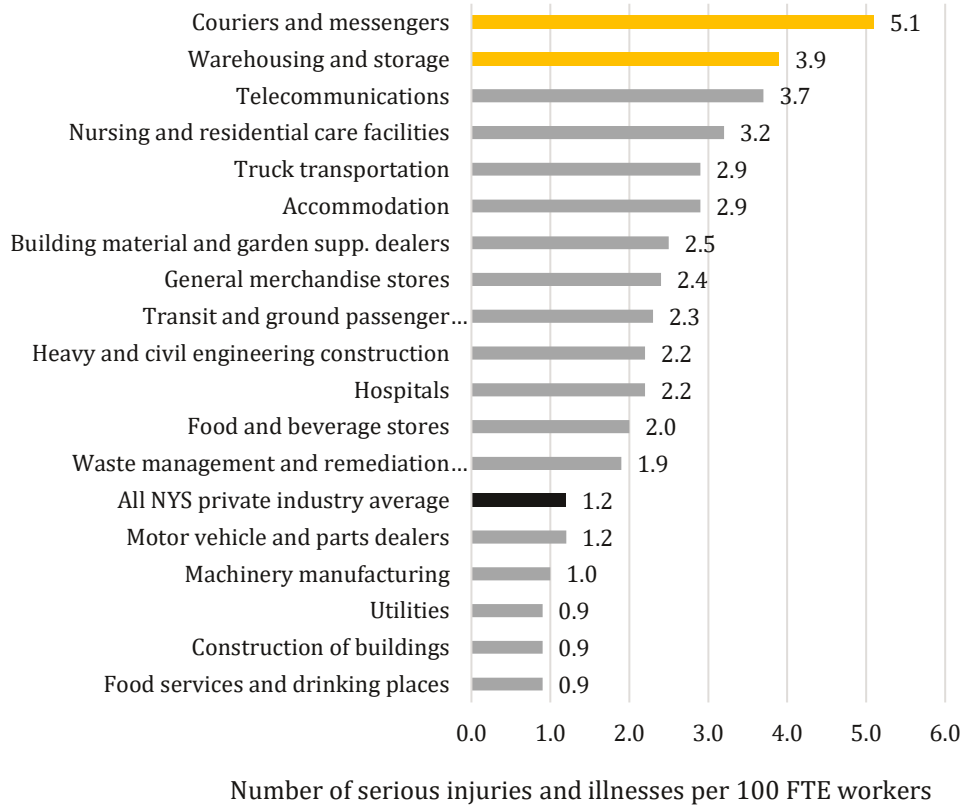
Source: US Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

Figure 2b. NYS Employment in the 'Couriers and Messengers' Industry, 2010-2021



Source: US Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

Figure 3. Rates of the Most Serious Job-Related Injuries, by New York State Industry



Source: New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL), *Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses data by industry (SOII)*, 2019. The “most serious” injuries refer to injuries that require job restriction or time off work. Note: 2019 is the latest available data from this source that includes the New York State warehousing and storage industry

Endnotes

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all New York State injury rates reported in this brief are based on an analysis of OSHA Injury Tracking Application data, 2021 available at <https://www.osha.gov/Establishment-Specific-Injury-and-Illness-Data>.

² All national injury rates cited in this report come from “The Injury Machine: How Amazon’s Production System Hurts Workers”, Strategic Organizing Center, 2022, https://thesoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/The-Injury-Machine_How-Amazons-Production-System-Hurts-Workers.pdf

³ “Amazon Global Supply Chain and Fulfillment Center Network,” MWPVL International, https://www.mwpvl.com/html/amazon_com.html

⁴ Strategic Organizing Center, 2022; “Amazon has resumed policies that penalize workers for taking too many breaks, just in time for Prime Day,” CNBC, Oct. 14, 2020: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/10/14/amazon-resumes-policy-that-dings-workers-for-taking-too-many-breaks.html>; AMAZON.COM, INC. v. ATTORNEY GENERAL LETITIA JAMES, Case 1:21-cv-00767, Complaint, paragraphs 87-88; and, AMAZON.COM, INC. v. ATTORNEY GENERAL LETITIA JAMES, Case 1:21-cv-00767, Complaint, paragraph 92.

⁵ Rick Karlin, “Massive Amazon fulfillment center opens in Schodack,” Times Union, September 9, 2020. <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Massive-Amaozon-distribution-center-opens-in-15554061.php#taboola-1>

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2010-2021

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators, 2019-2021

⁸ New York State Department of Labor, Long-term Industry Employment Projections, <https://statistics.labor.ny.gov/lspoj.shtm>.

⁹ New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL), Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses data by industry (SOII), https://www.bls.gov/iif/state_archive.htm#NY; Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Establishment Specific Injury and Illness Data (Injury Tracking Application), <https://www.osha.gov/Establishment-Specific-Injury-and-Illness-Data>

¹⁰ New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL), Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses data by industry (SOII), https://www.bls.gov/iif/state_archive.htm#NY; Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Establishment Specific Injury and Illness Data (Injury Tracking Application), <https://www.osha.gov/Establishment-Specific-Injury-and-Illness-Data>

¹¹ Jaclyn Diaz, “A New Law In California Aims To Protect Workers At Retail Warehouses Like Amazon’s,” National Public Radio, <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/23/1039970039/californias-new-law-targets-amazon-warehouses>

¹² Occupational Safety and Health Administration, “Clarification on how the formula is used by OSHA to calculate incident rates,” <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/2016-08-23>