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Warehouse Workers' Injuries Are Increasing as Employers Use Artificial Intelligence

Warehouse Employment

An increase in injuries suffered by warehouse workers, fueled by employers' use of artificial intelligence, is

drawing legislative attention. The focus is on Amazon and other major retail giants whose business has exploded since the COVID Pandemic emerged.

SOPHISTICATED SURVEILLANCE SOFTWARE

The companies deploy sophisticated surveillance software to track employees' job activities and production, imposing quotas and maintaining heavy workloads. This increased pace and production pressure has resulted in severe injuries to the backs, limbs, joints, and the psychiatric health of the workers. The Strategic Organizing Center (SOC) reported that Amazon warehouse injury rates are more than 50% higher than the workplace injury rates for all warehouse workers in the US.

WAREHOUSE WORKERS ARE CONFRONTED BY HAZARDS

1. Forklifts
2. Docks
3. Conveyors
4. Inadequate ventilation
5. Guardrails
6. Combustion by-products, ie. Carbon monoxide
7. Materials storage
8. Manual lifting/handling
9. Hazard communication
10. Charging stations (fire and explosion)
11. Poor ergonomics (musculoskeletal disorders)
12. Inadequate fire safety provisions
13. Lack of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE)
14. Heat stress

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Legislation was recently enacted in California [[AB701](#)] to require large warehouse employers to:

-Disclose quotas and pace-of-work standards to workers

- -Prohibit employers from counting the time that workers spend complying with health and safety laws as "time off task."
- -Require the Labor Commissioner to enforce the provisions of the law
- -The law will require employers to exempt from quotas: meal or rest periods, use of bathroom facilities, or compliance with occupational and safety regulations

OSHA

The U.S. Department of Labor announced that it's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited Amazon during inspections at six warehouse facilities in five states for failing to properly record work-related injuries and illnesses. The findings are part of an ongoing investigation. Following referrals from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, OSHA opened inspections on July 18, 2022, at Amazon locations in Deltona, Florida; Waukegan, Illinois; and New Windsor, New York; and on Aug. 1, 2022, at locations in Aurora, Colorado; Nampa, Idaho; and Castleton, New York. OSHA issued [Amazon citations for 14 recordkeeping violations](#), including failing to record injuries and illnesses, misclassifying injuries and illnesses, not recording injuries and illnesses within the required time, and not providing OSHA with timely injury and

illness records. Amazon faces \$29,008 in proposed penalties. Also, OSHA cited [Amazon for ergonomic safety violations](#) at three warehouse facilities,

NEW JERSEY RETAIL WAREHOUSES

New Jersey has experienced a surge in the establishment of retail warehouses. It is geographically suited for transport on the East coast and equal distance to major population centers like New York City and Philadelphia. It also is a central transportation hub with abundant air, land, and sea facilities. The State of New Jersey has reported numerous injuries of warehouse workers involving: forklift injuries, including falls and crush injuries. Investigative reports are published online.

NJ WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS

The New Jersey Legislature had many goals in mind when formulating a workers' compensation system for the state. In general, the goal was to relieve injured employees of paying for their own medical care and replace their lost wages with temporary and permanent disability benefits when necessary.

It is a system based upon expeditious administration so that compensation is awarded with a minimum delay and without a requirement for proof of fault. The Workers' Compensation Act also provides employers with a defined liability that is limited and determinate. In general, the administrative system established by the Act was created both to provide a direct remedy to the employee and limit litigation against the employer.

If you are a warehouse worker and have suffered a workplace injury, you should consult an attorney at law as soon as possible to determine whether a formal claim can be filed on your behalf.

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