
Hundreds of Amazon Workers Strike Over Unsafe Working Conditions

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More than 350 Amazon warehouse workers went on strike Tuesday across the United States (U.S.), refusing to work to protest unsafe conditions amid the coronavirus epidemic.

The call-in sick was organized by the labor rights groups United for Respect, New York Communities for Change, and Make the Road New York. It is the largest nationwide protest at the company since the start of the coronavirus outbreak.

Workers are urging the corporation to “immediately close down” facilities with COVID-19 cases, to provide testing and two weeks of pay for workers during that time. Amazon has said it would only pay workers who have contracted COVID-19, or who have to quarantine because of confirmed exposure.

But employees say it has been difficult to actually receive paid sick time, while some have been coming to work with fevers, according to United for Respect.

Warehouse staff at Amazon has been sounding the alarm for weeks about the lack of transparency and safety measures. At least 75 employees have tested positive for COVID-19 so far, in more than 50 facilities, according to the New York Times.

Workers are also asking Amazon not to retaliate against those of them who speak out for basic workers' rights.

In recent months, the company has been cracking down on employees who are organizing to fight for better conditions. After workers walked off the job in New York, Illinois, and Michigan this month, one of them was fired in retaliation. Amazon also fired two executive employees for denouncing warehouse workers' treatment.

Business Insider revealed Monday that Whole Foods, the Amazon-owned grocery store, has been tracking

employees and their likelihood to unionize to discourage their initiatives.

Athena, an alliance of groups dedicated to fighting injustices at Amazon, called on U.S. citizens to demonstrate solidarity with the striking employees.

Protesting workers say they will continue to call in sick until Amazon responds to their demands.

Tuesday's action comes as the company is set to announce what are expected to be record-high earnings results.
