

Work Shouldn't Hurt

HF 36 (Greenman)/SF 58 (Murphy) would ensure that workers have the information they need to be safe and successful on the job.

The Problem – The practices in Amazon’s warehouses are hurting Minnesota workers.

A 2021 National Employment Law Project (NELP) report shows that Amazon warehouse workers in Minnesota suffer injuries at double the rate of non-Amazon warehouse workers and almost four times the rate of all private sector workers in Minnesota.¹

These can be musculoskeletal injuries that stay with workers for the rest of their lives, leading to chronic pain and a risk of long-term disability.

“They just kept me working. They didn’t care if I was injured or not. They want me to hit this [performance] goal.” -Amazon warehouse worker in MN²

The Cause – Workers are pushing themselves to meet quotas that Amazon often changes and sometimes doesn't disclose to workers.

“Managers are always vague about what will get you fired, which creates this paranoia. [Employees ask questions about] what exactly will get them fired, and the responses are so vague that you basically know that if you’re not constantly moving, you’re probably gone.” -Amazon warehouse worker¹

Under this system, workers feel they are under intense surveillance and constant threat of discipline or firing. As a result, they report sometimes skipping breaks and not having time to address safety concerns.

“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 the 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 the manager, but it’s difficult or impossible to find a manager.” -Amazon warehouse worker in MN¹

¹ www.nelp.org/publication/injuries-dead-end-jobs-and-racial-inequity-in-amazons-minnesota-operations

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/06/01/amazon-osha-injury-rate/>

The Consequences - All Minnesotans are paying the costs:

- Coming to Minnesota, Amazon promised good and safe jobs. Instead, turnover at the Amazon warehouse is almost three times higher than at non-Amazon warehouses in MN.
- The NELP report shows that Amazon's practices are driving down standards for jobs across the state at the same time as Amazon is expanding its footprint in Minnesota. If their opaque quota system spreads to other warehouses or industries, it would increase the risks to worker safety in the state.¹
- Excessive worker injuries increase costs for our healthcare system and Minnesota taxpayers, and lead to incalculable suffering for workers.

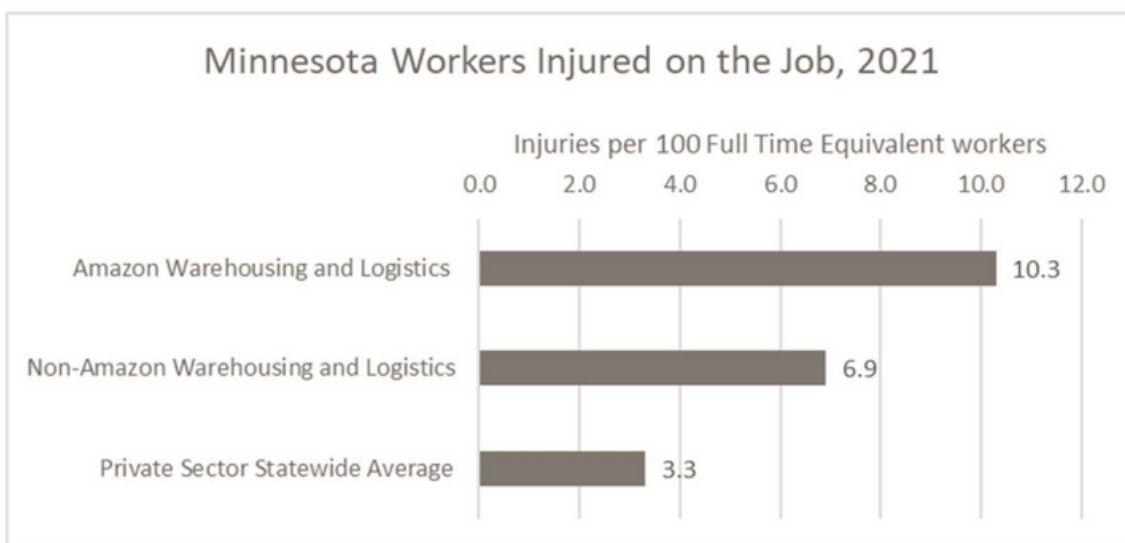
The Solution – Worker safety requires more transparency and accountability:

HF 36 (Greenman)/SF 58 (Murphy) would help give workers the information they need to be safe and successful on the job, by ensuring that workers:

- Have notice of the quotas and performance standards they are being held to and are notified when they are being changed;
- Have access to their basic workplace rights such as meal and restroom breaks; and
- Have the ability to request their own data and data in their warehouse on how fast they are working and how well they are performing at work.

HF 36/SF58 is supported by:

Minnesota AFL-CIO; Teamsters Joint Council 32; The Awood Center (contact: info@awoodcenter.org)



Worker Injury Rates by Sector in MN

(Source: NELP Report - Occupational Health and Safety Administration, Establishment Specific Injury and Illness Data, 2021. Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Research and Statistics Unit, Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, Minnesota, 2020)

Source: OSHA Injury Tracking Application and Bureau of Labor Statistics SOII, 2021