

Amazon Warehouse Associates Know Your Rights

Because workers like you stood up and demanded dignity in the workplace and an opportunity to protect themselves during the pandemic, Amazon has made substantial changes to its policies regarding rate and “Time Off Task.” As you may know, during this pandemic, rate and TOT policies at Amazon have made some workers feel like they don’t have the time to wash their hands, sanitize their workstations, or socially distance at work.

Amazon announced that it has stopped giving productivity and rate feedback and has stopped all disciplinary actions related to rates or Time Off Task that workers take to use the bathroom, sanitize their workstations, or socially distance.

This means you can do those things without worrying about receiving any manager feedback, any warnings, or any write-ups because of your TOT or rates. Pursuant to Amazon’s policy, Amazon shouldn’t fire you for slow rates or for TOT related to the things you need to do to keep yourself safe at work. Amazon says that it made these changes back in March, because it knew that letting you focus on social distancing, washing your hands, sanitizing your station, and following other health and safety guidelines are all important to help protect you from COVID-19.

Amazon did not do a good job of sharing this information with the people who need it the most, YOU.

According to Amazon, the suspension of TOT and rate policies is nationwide and they remain suspended until further notice.

Workers in New York City’s JFK8 facility have been speaking out about their problems with Amazon’s response to the pandemic. On June 3, a group of JFK8 workers filed a lawsuit against Amazon claiming that the company’s policies and practices violate public health guidance. One of their demands was a change to Amazon’s TOT and rate policies so that workers can keep themselves safe from COVID-19.

In response to the lawsuit, Amazon was pushed to publicly inform the court that these policies exist.

What does this mean for you?

You should not be disciplined for rates or for TOT if you are washing your hands, cleaning your station, or using the bathroom. According to Alexis Stephens, the Director of Human Resources for Amazon’s U.S. Non-Sort buildings, you “should not be disciplined” for this time. Alexis Stephens also says that while there “is no automatic TOT exemption of bathroom, hand washing, or cleaning time, managers are aware that associates should not be disciplined for time spent on such activities. This is consistent with pre-COVID-19 TOT policy and continues today.”

How can you protect your health and safety in the workplace?

Make sure you take the time to follow CDC and local guidance to protect yourself during the pandemic. If you need to wash your hands or clean your station, you can keep track of the time that you are spending on those activities to make sure Amazon is not counting them against your TOT or rates.

Document any issues you have acquiring masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, or PPE and take note of any crowding that you are seeing in your facility or problems you have securing quarantine leave related to COVID-19. In order to follow Amazon’s rules regarding use of phones or cameras, you can just write down the issues you encounter in a notebook or on a piece of paper if you need to.

Learn more about these policies online at www.publicjustice.net/awa-know-your-rights