Amazon union lawyers up for Staten Island warehouse injuries

By Catalina Gonella
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1 comment
The Amazon Labor Union is zeroing in on job-related injuries through a new program at the Staten Island fulfillment center JFK8, the group said Tuesday.

The union has retained attorney Sean Riordan of the firm McIntyre, Donohue, Accardi, Salmonson & Riordan LLP as disability counsel. Union President Chris Smalls, who helped lead the union to its historic vote at JFK8 in April, said workplace injuries will be his top priority going into the new year. The union said Amazon workers are twice as likely to be hurt on the job compared to other warehouse workers, citing a study done last year.

“Amazon has workers doing 10 to 12 hours of calisthenics, on their feet for 10 to 12 hours and they have to commute two to three hours each way and I know from being a former employee that I've seen workers get injured on a daily basis,” Smalls said.

According to a Business Insider report, data collected in workplace inspections suggests that Amazon's pace of work directly contributes to higher injury risk for Amazon warehouse workers.

Riordan will be working with the union to educate workers at the Staten Island warehouse. He said Amazon workers are disproportionately hurt on the job, and not enough of them are filing claims.

“Really, the approach here is education, education, education, because you can't enforce your rights and until you actually know your rights,” Riordan said. “A lot of people don't even understand that they have workers' compensation rights in the state of New York..”
The program will be multi-pronged, educating workers on their rights, ensuring they get the proper medical evaluation, and assisting with enforcement if needed, the union said in a statement.

Amazon did not return a request for comment. The company has yet to recognize the union after it voted to unionize.

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