

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Americas > USA > Social Struggles, labor (USA) > Epidemics / Pandemics (health, Social struggles, USA) > **USA : Amazon Reinstates Fired Warehouse Worker After Employees Strike**

# USA : Amazon Reinstates Fired Warehouse Worker After Employees Strike

Tuesday 28 April 2020, by [GURLEY Lauren Kaori](#) (Date first published: 27 April 2020).

*Workers say after more than 50 of them went on strike at an Amazon warehouse in Shakopee, Minnesota on Sunday, the employee was reinstated. Amazon won't talk about whether she was ever fired at all.*

A group of Amazon employees at a fulfillment center in Shakopee, Minnesota, a hotbed of Amazon labor unrest, ended their shift early on Sunday 26 in a **spontaneous walkout over the firing of a worker who had stayed home to protect her two children from coronavirus.**

<https://www.facebook.com/Awoodcenter/posts/1150660101944847>

Organizers of the walkout said more than 50 workers participated in Sunday's strike, but Amazon told Motherboard the number was no more than 25.

The Shakopee walkout follows strikes at Amazon facilities in Staten Island, Chicago, and Detroit over the company's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Following Sunday's walkout, Shakopee workers say Amazon agreed to return the fired worker's badge and allow her to return to work later this week. Amazon would not confirm to Motherboard that Osman had been fired but confirmed on Monday 27 that she is employed by Amazon.

Motherboard has seen copies of her appeals paperwork that discusses her termination.

Amazon said in an email to Motherboard that *"this group is spreading misinformation,"* without noting what group it was referring to or what the misinformation was.

*"Of the more 1,000 employees at our Shakopee, Minnesota site, 25 people—less than quarter of a percent of associates—participated in [Sunday's] demonstration,"* Rachael Lighty, a spokesperson for Amazon, told Motherboard. *"Since the early days of this situation, we have worked closely with health authorities to respond proactively, ensuring we can continue to serve communities while taking care of our associates and teams."*

*"Faiza Osman has been a dedicated worker at Amazon for nearly three years, and was terminated for staying home with her two children during the pandemic,"* a statement from the Awood Center, a grassroots worker advocacy organization for Somali Amazon workers in Minnesota said on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/Awoodcenter/posts/1150660101944847>

*"Amazon leadership had informed workers to stay home if they felt that they needed the time off, yet they fired Osman evidently for doing what she was allowed to do."*

The striking workers were also protesting Amazon's announcement last week that it would terminate its unlimited paid leave policy on May 1 when workers at the predominantly Somali warehouse, known as MSP1, will begin fasting for the month of Ramadan, and amid news of the first three cases of coronavirus at the facility.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-24/amazon-asks-workers-sheltering-at-home-to-return-or-see-leave>

*"Now that we're having confirmed coronavirus cases every single day, Amazon is ending unlimited paid time off. This means that those who are sick and at home will have to come into work,"* Hafsa Hassan, a 22-year-old ship dock worker at MSP1 and leader of Sunday's walkout, told Motherboard. *"It's very inconvenient that they're changing their policies right as the month of Ramadan starts when people aren't eating or drinking or taking in as much nutrients. One single person who is sick could end up making a lot of people sick. We've already had three cases this week and lord knows how many more of us are sick."*

Amazon's decision to end its unlimited unpaid leave policy, at a time when the number of Covid-19 cases in Amazon warehouses is rapidly growing, puts workers in the position of having to choose between suffering penalties for staying home from work sick or endangering the lives of their coworkers.

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/939p3e/coronavirus-cases-likely-to-exponentially-increase-in-amazon-warehouses](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/939p3e/coronavirus-cases-likely-to-exponentially-increase-in-amazon-warehouses)

Since confirming its first case at a delivery center in Queens, New York, Amazon has confirmed more than 75 cases of coronavirus in over half of its 110 warehouse facilities.

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/jge77g/hundreds-of-amazon-workers-are-not-going-to-work-in-nationwide-protest](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/jge77g/hundreds-of-amazon-workers-are-not-going-to-work-in-nationwide-protest)

On March 31, an Amazon operations manager at a facility in southern California became the first to die of the virus.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8219487/Amazon-warehouse-worker-death-COVID-19-firm-sacks-three-workers-calling-safety.html>

Hassan told Motherboard most of the night shift employees who walked off the job on Sunday 26 worked on the same shift as an associate they believe tested positive for Coronavirus and had gone home sick on Friday 24. Workers at the facility have received three texts from management since Friday 24 informing employees about separate positive cases of Coronavirus.

Amazon typically informs workers of coronavirus cases at their warehouses via text message, often days after the infected employee last worked, raising concerns among workers that Amazon is waiting too long to inform workers about information that is critical to their health and safety. Amazon also promises to inform any employees who worked closely with infected workers, but does not disclose the names of infected workers to protect their privacy under HIPAA.

Current warehouse workers around the country have told Motherboard that they do not trust Amazon to inform everyone who came in close contact with infected workers in a timely manner. *"They're waiting days to tell us about these cases and using HIPAA to their advantage not to disclose names,"* Hassan said. *"At least tell us what shift a person worked on. This doesn't make any sense. What about our safety?"*

Hassan said Amazon is not sending out these texts in Somali, making it difficult or impossible for many Somali workers at MSP1 to understand the risks they take by going to work.

Amazon said that it has Somali-language signs at the warehouse and that it also has managers at the warehouse that speak Somali.

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Do you work for Amazon and have a tip to share with us? We'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch with the author: [Lauren.gurley@vice.com](mailto:Lauren.gurley@vice.com)

or Signal 201-897-2109.

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Tensions between workers and management at MSP1 have been escalating for weeks. In mid-April following the termination of activist employees in Seattle and Amazon's Staten Island warehouse, Amazon fired a worker who had criticized Amazon's labor practices at MSP1. [https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/carolineodonovan/amazon-fired-employee-involved-in-workplace-organizing-in?fbclid=IwAR3jB8gwpbElYn2ncnEkzpOjif3GTV0j3tZlEwXJs-nfDKB7whrgT\\_hDHuA](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/carolineodonovan/amazon-fired-employee-involved-in-workplace-organizing-in?fbclid=IwAR3jB8gwpbElYn2ncnEkzpOjif3GTV0j3tZlEwXJs-nfDKB7whrgT_hDHuA)

That worker, Bashir Mohamed had been active in organizing workers to demand better safety protocols during the pandemic and had circulated petitions demanding improved social distancing policies.

Workers also filed a complaint with the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, demanding Amazon close the facility after reports that a doctor had diagnosed a worker with Covid-19.

<https://www.startribune.com/workers-group-files-osha-complaint-against-amazon-after-doctor-tells-shakopee-employee-to-self-quarantine/569555992/>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/22/tech/amazon-warehouse-bashir-mohamed/index.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/Awoodcenter/posts/1137318463279011>

In recent years, the Shakopee warehouse, which first opened in 2016, has led the way in demanding Amazon improve working conditions in its warehouses. Workers have led multiple strikes and in November forced Amazon to improve working conditions for the first time in the company's history.

<https://www.wired.com/story/meet-the-immigrants-who-took-on-amazon/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/20/technology/amazon-somali-workers-minnesota.html>

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**P.S.**

[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/n7jaaq/amazon-reinstates-fired-warehouse-worker-after-employees-strike](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/n7jaaq/amazon-reinstates-fired-warehouse-worker-after-employees-strike)

A lot of articles about Amazon are available on ESSF site

[http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?page=mot&id\\_mot=9615](http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?page=mot&id_mot=9615)