Shift Work Dangers Fatality File



Amazon workers ‘forced to go back to work’ after fellow employee dies on shift

An Amazon worker in apparent cardiac arrest was lying on the floor of a warehouse for 20 minutes before anyone noticed, according to a report.

Billy Foister, 48, who scanned and stocked shelves for the internet giant, collapsed at an Etna, Ohio, facility just a week after he’d visited a medical clinic complaining of chest pains and a headache. He was given two beverages to combat dehydration and sent back to work, the Guardian reported.

Foister’s brother, Edward, told the paper he was shocked his brother was on the floor dying for so long before an Amazon floor monitor spotted him.

“How can you not see a 6-foot-3-inch man laying on the ground and not help him within 20 minutes? A couple of days before, he put the wrong product in the wrong bin and within two minutes, management saw it on camera and came down to talk to him about it,” Edward Foister said.

According to the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, which included Amazon on its 2019 “Dirty Dozen” list of the most dangerous employers in the United States, six Amazon workers died on the job between November 2018 and April 2019. At the Etna warehouse alone, 28 calls to 911 were made between January and March 2019.

An employee who worked the same shift as Foister told the Guardian that after he died, they were immediately “forced to go back to work.”

“No time to decompress. Basically watch a man pass away and then get told to go back to work, everyone, and act like it’s fine,” said the Amazon employee.

Amazon said they responded to Foister “within minutes,” but Edward blames the company for his brother’s death.

“There was no reason for my brother to have died. He went to AmCare complaining about chest pains. He should have been sent to the hospital, not just sent back to work just to put things like toothpaste in a bin so somebody can get it in an hour,” Edward told the Guardian. “It seems Amazon values money way more than life. If they did their job right, I wouldn’t have had to bury my little brother.”