

AMZN

Working conditions

Amazon A–Z: Work Day

Work in an Amazon Fulfillment Center is not divided into a standard eight-hour shifts, five days a week, but is conducted in the “equivalent working time system”. The Polish Labour Law Act (Art. 135. § 1.) allows in such a case to extend the daily working time up to 12 hours, while balancing it with a reduction of the working time on the remaining days or the introduction of additional days off, so that in a given “accountancy period” (from one up to – in exceptional circumstances – four months) achieve the average standard working time. In Amazon such an accountancy period is 3 months.

In the case of Amazon Poland, the normal working day is 10 hours long and the weekly number of working days is 4. However, the schedule (which is set for each month separately) may include extra days off or extra working days – everything must add up to the average standard working time in three-month accountancy periods respectively, and not within a month or a week. Schedules of individual departments are set so that the logistics centre operates almost continuously – also at night and at weekends. Only between the night and the day shifts there is a “window” for service or cleaning work.

However, for every worker the day with Amazon takes longer. The company provides employees with two fifteen-minute breaks, included in the working time, but for the half-hour lunch break they must work additional 30 minutes. This extends the working day to 10.5 hours. There is also the issue of commuting: Amazon facilities are located on the outskirts of cities, and the people employed there often come from distant towns or villages. In extreme cases, the bus ride can take up to 2.5 hours in one direction, which gives a total of up to 15.5 hours devoted to work and commute. In this case, there is hardly enough time to sleep and prepare for the next day, not to mention family or social life.

sources:

1. the Polish Labour Law Act <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19740240141>
2. *Przedświąteczny szczyt w Amazonie. „To nie jest peak time, ale death time”*, “Gazeta Wyborcza”, 2018 <https://wyborcza.pl/7,155287,24273569,przedswiateczny-szczyt-w-amazonie-to-nie-jest-peak-time-ale.html>

commute (0,5 to 2,5 h*)

work

short brake (15 min)

work

lunch brake (0,5 h)

work

short brake (15 min)

work

commute (0,5 to 2,5 h*)

work time + brakes = 10,5 h
total commute time = 1 to 5 h

total: up to 15,5 h

