When Your Body Beats You: Preventing Over-Exertion and Musculoskeletal Injury Fatality File



Over-Exertion & Heat Stress Fatality at Amazon Warehouse

A warehouse employee at Amazon’s EWR9 fulfillment center in Carteret, New Jersey, collapsed during his shift on July 13, 2022, amid the company’s high-pressure Prime Day rush. The worker, identified only as “Rafael,” was performing fast-paced material-handling duties in an upper-floor area reported by coworkers to have elevated temperatures and limited ventilation. He later died at the hospital.

OSHA launched a federal investigation after workers expressed concern that heat stress, over-exertion, and demanding productivity rates may have contributed to the fatality. Some employees reported that the worker had complained of chest pain before collapsing and alleged delays in emergency response, though Amazon disputed these claims and maintained the death was due to a “personal medical condition.” The conflicting accounts and the reported working conditions triggered heightened scrutiny of Amazon’s heat-exposure controls and workload expectations.

This case highlights the deadly potential of over-exertion, heat exposure, and high-intensity work demands, especially in large fulfillment centers where temperature and pace are difficult to control.

Source: Nbcnews.com