

Video shows overheated UPS driver collapse on doorstep in Arizona

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Are you a delivery driver? We want to hear from you. Contact us to tell us how heat and other issues affect your job, and what you think needs to be done. Comments will be published anonymously.

On Thursday, July 14, a front door security camera recorded a video of a young United Parcel Service (UPS) delivery worker collapsing from the heat on a porch in Scottsdale, Arizona. The video, which has gone viral following its publishing last week, shows an unnamed worker staggering up to homeowner Brian Enriquez's door. He collapses to the ground when he reaches down to place the package he is delivering on the Scottsdale resident's doorstep.

The worker sits there for about 10 seconds, then lays down, immediately struggling to his feet, pushing the doorbell button and staggering away.

Enriquez was concerned about the driver's health, so he posted the video, which was picked up by numerous news outlets. "I was concerned for the fact that he was coming, stumbling to the door. Had I gotten to my phone sooner, I could have talked to him through my Ring (doorbell), but he had already left the property at that point," said Enriquez in commentary to a local Arizona NBC affiliate.

According to NBC News, the high on July 14 in the city was 110 degrees Fahrenheit. In a statement to the press, UPS stated the employee was "fine." According to the corporation, "UPS drivers are trained to work outdoors and for the effects of hot weather."

In fact, UPS drivers have suffered heat-related injuries by the dozens in recent years. A 2019 NBC News survey determined "[a]t least 107 UPS workers in 23 states have been hospitalized for heat illnesses since 2015, according to state and federal worker-safety data." The investigation explains that "[t]he only U.S. employer with more heat incidents reported to federal

regulators than UPS is the U.S. Postal Service—which also doesn't currently air-condition the majority of its delivery trucks."

This occurred even as UPS's profits have surged. Prior to the pandemic, NBC reports, "the online shopping boom has been a windfall for UPS. Gross revenue has risen almost 40 percent to nearly \$72 billion, and its U.S. workforce has ballooned to 396,000, making UPS one of the nation's biggest employers." Despite these numbers, workers continue to suffer heat stroke yearly by the hundreds.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the corporation's profits have gone even further upward. A yearly breakdown of the corporation's revenue by Macrotrends.net states "UPS revenue for the twelve months ending March 31, 2022 was \$98.757B, a 10.34% increase year-over-year. UPS annual revenue for 2021 was \$97.287B, a 14.96% increase from 2020. UPS annual revenue for 2020 was \$84.628B, a 14.22% increase from 2019."

Last month, the *World Socialist Web Site* reported the death of 24-year-old UPS driver Esteban Chavez Jr. Chavez's death, as well as that of an unnamed Amazon worker in Carteret, New Jersey, a few days later that highlights the unsafe environment in the logistics industry during the scorching summer months.

According to Bonnie Fournier, who posted a petition on change.org, "Require UPS to provide air conditioning to delivery drivers—SAFETY FIRST": "[Six] years ago, I started this petition to help other drivers NEVER experience what my husband had to go through. The union reps reached out to me but never followed through with helping to protect their dedicated drivers who have no air in their vehicles." As of this writing, the petition has 187,450 signatures.

Next year, the contract between UPS and the

Teamsters union expires. In previous negotiations, the workers demanded air conditioning in their trucks, but the union has always found an excuse not to include it. According to the same NBC investigation, “On a long hot day of deliveries, the temperature in the cargo area of a truck can soar to 140 degrees and higher. UPS drivers have recorded temperatures as high as 152 degrees.”

Significantly, the news network quotes an anonymous worker, who exclaims, “our workload is increasing and we’re still expected to get done faster... I pray every year I don’t get a heatstroke.” The survey reports that “[d]espite their union protections, drivers across the country described a culture of intimidation and retaliation at UPS that keeps them quiet even when their lives could be at risk.”

For its part, OSHA has done little for workers because “neither the agency nor Congress ever created federal rules on heat exposure.”

The investigation came a year after the Teamsters union forced through an unpopular contract by means of an undemocratic clause in its constitution allowing automatic ratification if less than one-half of the workforce votes. “No organization that was in any way accountable to workers could have such rules,” wrote the WSWS at the time. “Why is a two-thirds majority not required to ratify the agreement, rather than to reject it?”

The 2019 master contract included the introduction of a hyper-exploited “22.4” driver/warehouse position which allowed the company to expand the total weekly work hours, lower the pay and double the duties expected of new hires. The contract was ratified with less than 18 percent of the membership voting in some locals.

The new Teamsters president, Sean O’Brien, has sought to play up the tactical divisions that emerged between former President James Hoffa Jr. and himself in the course of the 2018–2019 UPS contract negotiations. However, O’Brien was in charge of the Teamsters’ package division in 2013, when the previous UPS contract was undemocratically forced through.

That contract included a “no strike/lockout” clause which was used to tie the hands of UPS workers following the 2018 contract’s undemocratic passage, despite the latter having produced a 93 percent strike

vote that year. It also included numerous contract supplements and givebacks for health care, all of which were pushed through by Hoffa despite having been rejected by the membership.



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