Instacart claims ‘absolutely no impact’ from planned workers’ strike

Grocery delivery company Instacart said today that a planned work stoppage by its shoppers had “absolutely no impact on Instacart’s operations” and claims it sold more groceries over the past 72 hours “than ever before.”

“Today, we saw 40 percent more shoppers on the platform compared to the same day and time last week,” the company said in a statement emailed to *The Verge*. “In the last week alone, 250,000 new people signed up to become Instacart full-service shoppers and 50,000 of them have already started shopping on the platform.”

The shoppers were seeking hazard pay and better protections from COVID-19 exposure

Last week, Instacart shoppers, who are largely contract gig workers not eligible for benefits, said they would refuse new orders today because they did not think the company had done enough to protect them during the COVID-19 outbreak. (Some Instacart workers, like a group that unionized in February in the Chicago suburb of Skokie, are in-store part- and full-time workers, separate from standard contract shoppers.)

The shoppers want Instacart to provide protective gear such as hand sanitizer, add a $5-per-order hazard payment, and expand its sick leave policy. Instacart said late Sunday it had made and was planning to distribute hand sanitizer to all shoppers who wanted it.

The company announced March 9th it was giving 14 days of paid

leave to any part-time workers or shoppers who had been diagnosed with COVID-19 or who have been put into mandatory quarantine. It later extended that benefit through May 8th. Instacart also introduced a bonus program, additional promotions for full-service shoppers to earn more based on regional demand, and updated the tipping option in its app.

In a statement Sunday, the workers called the hand sanitizer and tip adjustments “a sick joke,” adding that the tip structure was likely to “provide no meaningful benefit to shoppers.”

Instacart has announced plans to hire 300,000 new shoppers due to the overwhelming demand for grocery delivery during the COVID-19 outbreak. We reached out to the organizers of the work stoppage and will update if we hear back.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/3/30/21200348/instacart-strike-coronavirus-no-impact