

Direct Questions & Responses

What sort of investigation did Integrity do into Jeff Lockhart's death, and what did it find?

After the tragic loss of Jeff Lockhart we fully cooperated with all investigations into the death of this associate. Integrity, OSHA and Frontier Investigations from Gallagher Basset completed independent thorough investigations. The medical examiner was also involved.

The unfortunate passing of Mr. Lockhart was found through each investigation to be a non-work related event due to natural causes. The results of the workers compensation determination was sent to the commonwealth and estate along with the steps to follow in case the family wanted to appeal the final decision.

Does Integrity require any physical exams for warehouse pickers? Is there anything else the company does to determine if someone is cut out for the job?

Integrity does not require physical examinations. Integrity follows best practices for our industry; it is not a common practice to require a physical examination for routine warehouse work. In an effort to ensure applicants are clear about the physical demands required for the job Integrity provides very thorough job descriptions and realistic job previews including a video describing the different functions and the physicality required within the facilities. Applicants are asked about their ability to perform the essential functions of the job in each area. Once a job is offered, Integrity allows the associate the opportunity to request reasonable accommodation if a personal medical condition requires it. For example, more frequent breaks, lifting restrictions or other accommodations.

What sort of health and life insurance benefits are extended to Integrity employees who work as temps?

Integrity offers multiple insurance plans. These include minimum essential health care plans, limited hospital indemnity plans, life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment, dental and short term disability. These are offered as a choice for associates to participate after 8 hours of work.

Does Integrity know if Jeff Lockhart had any life or health insurance through the job?

We offer benefits to all employees. Out of respect for privacy, we do not comment on whether or not any of our associates choose to enroll in our benefits plans.

Was anything done by Integrity or Amazon to help the family financially after his death?

The Integrity family was shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of Mr. Lockhart. One of our staff members was with Mrs. Lockhart when she was notified by the physician about her husband's passing. Several Integrity associates and company representatives attended the viewing services. Following the services we attempted to reach Mrs. Lockhart several times, and we did not receive a return call. The purpose of our calls was to see how the family was doing and to determine how we might be of assistance to Mrs. Lockhart and the family. Since there was no return call after several attempts we chose to allow the family to have their privacy and contact us when they felt it was appropriate. In the rare case that a personal health related emergency occurs, Integrity Staffing provides support to families in need during personal tragedies whether they are work or non-work related. We take pride in our track record of providing this type of support across the country throughout the Integrity family. We wish we could have assisted Mrs. Lockhart during this crisis and regret any misunderstandings.

What is the typical duration of a temp position at Amazon through Integrity?

Again, in the interest of clear communication and expectations our job descriptions and applications clearly state the duration of our assignments are based on business need.

While we have associates sign off on these documents confirming their understanding and providing transparency regarding the temporary/seasonal nature of our openings, each year a significant number of associates do convert to full time work. We make great effort to not imply that a full time position is available or promised to an associate.

What determines whether or not an Integrity temp becomes a full-time Amazon employee?

There are a variety of factors that are considered based on business need.

Response to Article Draft

As I said earlier, the story deals with the death of Jeff Lockhart, who was an Integrity temp at the Chester (RIC2) fulfillment center. He died in the early morning of Jan. 19, 2013, after collapsing while picking on the warehouse's third floor. His death was heart-related. So far as I can tell, neither Amazon nor Integrity said anything publicly about this death. It did not make the news, either.

Jeff worked for Integrity for approximately 2 months.

We did not publicly comment out of respect for Mr. Lockhart and to ensure the family had privacy during their time of grief. In the rare instance of a personal or non-work tragedy we typically do not make public comments.

Amcare provided the first response, then transferred care to local EMT's. Amazon told the state that Lockhart was found within a minute of his last recorded pick. But other records do not bear that out. Virginia's OSHA office said his last pick was logged at 2:28 a.m. According to county EMS records, the 911 call from the fulfillment center came 11 minutes later, at 2:39 a.m. A worker who was there said there were delays in getting Lockhart down to Amcare, and that he had to be put onto a cart normally used for products, then lowered in the warehouse's VRC lift.

No comment.

Neither Amazon nor Integrity were faulted by OSHA in the incident. No fines or citations were issued.

This is correct and we would not expect any fines or citations in the event of a non-work related natural death. OSHA determined this to be a non-occupational related death.

The workers I interviewed who were employed there at the time were not happy with how it was handled. They told me that rumors about the death persisted for days before management addressed them. As one worker said, "Management needed to address this instead of acting like it didn't happen." Eventually workers were told grief counseling was available. Workers said they knew of no discussions as to whether rates should be reconsidered given a cardiac death in the warehouse. Expectations remained the same, they said.

The loss of a coworker is very difficult for everyone. Associates were notified of the unfortunate loss with necessary information within the same day. On site grief counselors were provided the next morning and our associates were notified of the passing of Mr. Lockhart through various methods. EAP services were available for those associates wishing to speak with a professional beyond the time the grief counselors were on site.

Tim Taylor, a former Amazon trainer at the warehouse, said, "This was a situation that happened and then all of the sudden it just disappeared. What did Amazon do to help? What did Integrity do to help Jeff's family?"

One of our on-site representatives went to the hospital to meet Mrs. Lockhart. Our representative was present when the Dr. delivered the unfortunate news. We offered our condolences, staff members attended the viewing. We placed multiple calls to the Mrs. Lockhart to see if there was anything that we could do to assist. They were unreturned. We then contacted a known friend of Mrs. Lockhart. The friend informed her that she had most likely not responded because she was grieving. Our plan was to provide additional assistance to Mrs. Lockhart and her children. We had various supportive services to offer the family however we did not hear from Mrs. Lockhart. Out of respect for the family we didn't attempt to reach Mrs. Lockhart after this time. We had left messages with our contact information so she could control if and when she wanted to reach out to us. We realize everyone grieves differently and didn't want to appear disrespectful.

I interviewed more than 50 people who worked in or staffed Amazon warehouses, many of whom were employed at the Chester site in particular, and many of whom were hired by Integrity. A lot of interviewees felt the expectations were unrealistic (the typical picker quota is 120 orders per hour, according to workers there). Though some enjoyed the fast pace, others told me they struggled to keep up, and often worked through pain or discomfort. Some said they couldn't always use the bathroom as needed because it would go against their rate. I obtained 911 dispatch reports for the Chester warehouse, and ambulance runs appear to be routine there. From when the warehouse opened in the fall of 2012, through March of this year, there were more than 185 calls for service there -- on average, more than one per week.

While our goal is to have no one leave the facility in an ambulance due to a work related emergency, less than 5% of ambulance visits over the past 2 years for Integrity Associates have been related to work events. Please keep in mind when you review the ambulance events there is a significant difference in those that are work related incidents and those that are personal such as epilepsy, diabetes related, COPD and other conditions.

Most of the calls were for chest pains, trouble breathing, and spells of unconsciousness. The reports suggest many patients were trying to work through illness or pain. That includes a woman who was working with bronchitis. Another who'd been sick and vomiting for two days. At times, Amcare appeared stretched thin. One woman was pregnant with twins at the warehouse when she had complications. The county asked Amcare to take her to the front entrance so they could get to her quickly, but Amcare responded that it couldn't do that because there were other patients in Amcare.

The health and welfare of our associates is very important to us. We have several options for our associates who are experiencing health related issues. We take the welfare of our associates very seriously. Our associates are offered Amcare for both work and non-work related incidents. We encourage our associates to take care of their well-being. To ensure they are able to do so, they are offered a medical waiver option, 40 hours of approved time off if needed, and our associates can request reasonable accommodations. During the hiring process, the potential associate has an opportunity to share any concerns related to their ability to perform the job for which they are applying. Once an associate is working and on the assignment, they have the ability to request a reasonable accommodation that would assist them in performing the essential functions of the job.

Those calls would have been in addition to the incidents that Amcare treats in-house without the help of outside first responders. This appears to be the way Amazon prefers to handle health issues. A brochure that turned up in a public records request instructed workers NOT to call 911 in an emergency, but instead to refer any issues in the warehouse to security or Amcare. Many workers I spoke to felt this policy, and Amcare itself, was meant at least in part to keep any health or safety issues internal.

Lockhart's family felt Amazon and Integrity were not forthcoming about what happened. His father and his widow say that when they visited the warehouse after he died, they asked to speak to co-workers, to visit the spot where his body was found, and to see any security footage that might shed light on what happened. They say all these requests were denied.

We do not have the details of the family's request to visit (whom they spoke with, when they visited or what was said) however we regret any appearance of being insensitive to the family's needs. The loss of a loved one is stressful and difficult. While there can be circumstances beyond our control we would never intentionally do something to make this time be more difficult for the family.

One thing Lockhart's family wanted to know was what, if anything might be done for his three children. As a temp worker, Lockhart did not have life insurance, or health insurance, through his job with Integrity, according to his family. Lockhart had told friends and family that he was set to "convert" to an Amazonian soon, and therefore have benefits, but it didn't happen before he died. Lockhart's father says he was told there was nothing Amazon could do because Lockhart technically wasn't an Amazon employee. Lockhart's widow says she received a card in the mail roughly two weeks after he died, with a Visa gift card with a few hundred dollars on it. She believes the

money was pooled personally by employees. The family says they never received anything else, either through Integrity or Amazon, to mitigate the death.

Integrity, during that time, offered our associates limited medical including accidental death and dental insurance after our associates have completed 8 hours of work. This is an option for associates to choose but not mandatory. In observance of the associate's and his family privacy we won't comment on his personal status or private information.

During times like this, there is no level of support that can mitigate the loss of a life. Although we are under no legal obligation to provide assistance in a non-work related death we certainly stood ready to provide assistance to Mrs. Lockhart and the children.

The Chester facility, like others, relies heavily on temps. One Integrity staffer told me the worker rolls roughly triple in Chester during peak, from about 1,300 to almost 4,000. The temp workers do not receive the same benefits as the direct hires, and those I talked to described it as a kind of class system. Many who I interviewed felt they were misled about eventually becoming Amazonians with blue badges and full-time jobs.

We understand that many if not most of the associates who come to work for us as temporary associates hope to become full time employees of Amazon. We take great care to communicate clearly the expectations of their employment and cover the opportunities that may or may not exist at the time of hiring by Integrity. We realize the desire to obtain full time employment can lead to misunderstandings by the applicant.

Applicants view and review information during the recruiting process that clearly outlines multiple times the seasonality of the positions offered. Additionally, we inform applicants that due to the seasonal nature of this position, it is NOT advisable to quit, leave or give notice at a permanent position.

They said they were led to believe they would convert if they performed well and made it through peak. Instead, they were eventually laid off. Workers told me it's common for temps to not even be informed they've been let go, but instead to show up at the Chester warehouse only to learn that their key card no longer lets them into the building. Phyllis Branch, who was an Integrity temp in Chester, told me she was "led to believe I would be there permanently." After being given instructions on how to go online and convert, her conversion never went through and she lost her job. Another former temp, Antonio Miller, told me he worked for Integrity for seven months, believed he was going to convert, but was then let go via voicemail message. Such experiences were recounted again and again in interviews.

This is not a common practice and highly unlikely that an associate would not be contacted. As mentioned in the earlier response, we make every effort to clearly communicate the nature of the employment and there is no promise of permanent employment.

We have a procedure to notify the associates when the assignment has been completed. If you are willing to provide the names of the former associates who expressed concerns we are happy to respond directly to those concerns to address any misunderstandings.

We want to thank you for the opportunity to address these concerns and appreciate your understanding of the limitation created by our desire to respect the privacy of the associate and his family.