

# How to Become an Amazon Driver

So you think you might want to deliver for Amazon?

There are lots of reasons to be an Amazon driver:

- Good pay \$17 to \$19 per hour, or more, depending on location.
- 40 hour work weeks.
- 4 days on, 3 days off.
- Doing something you feel appreciated for.
- Physically active.
- Not too difficult to do.

## What is it like to be an Amazon driver?

A typical day usually goes like this:

1. Show up on time to the station.
2. Get your route assignment, work phone and van from the dispatcher.
3. Login to Mentor and Flex apps.
4. Inspect your van, start it up, and stage it.
5. Scan packages assigned to you and load them into your van. Each day you might have from 150 to 350 packages.
6. Follow the route on the Flex app to deliver your packages. Usually from 120 to 200 stops, depending on where you are delivering.
7. You are given a 30-minute lunch and two 15-minute breaks.
8. When done with your route, call Dispatch to see if anyone else on your team needs help (a rescue).
9. Fill up with gas.
10. Return to the station.
11. Unload your empty bags.
12. Return any undelivered packages to the RTS desk.
13. Park your van and check in with Dispatch.
14. Each day can last as long as 10 hours, but is often 7 or 8 hours.

## Basic steps to deliver a package

1. Drive to the address.
2. Find a place to park.
3. Find the package in your van.
4. Scan the package.
5. Find the front door (or other appropriate place to deliver).
6. Place the package in a safe spot.
7. Take a picture.
8. Get back in your van.

## What kind of people are successful drivers?

- Organized.
- Physically capable of quickly getting in and out of the van 200 times each day.
- On-time.
- Good at using GPS to navigate.
- Confident and capable driver.
- Dependable. Show up when you are scheduled to work.
- Able to lift and carry 50-pound boxes (usually you will only have a few packages each day that weigh more than 40 pounds. Most packages weigh less than a pound.
- Responsible.
- Supportive of other drivers on your team. We all run into problems and being willing to help pitch in to get the packages delivered when somebody can't finish their route is a big part of what makes a good driver.
- Positive attitude, even when the weather is bad and you have a van full of packages.
- Self-motivated.
- Problem solver.

# Physical Requirements

Delivery for Amazon involves being active all day long. The best people for this type of job enjoy moving constantly, like being outdoors, and are able to handle the walking, climbing stairs and carrying packages. A typical day involves:

- 15-20,000 steps
- Climbing 10 to 20 flights of stairs
- 10 hours of constant movement

If you are normally physically active then you won't have a problem as a delivery driver. It might be hard for a few weeks as your body adjusts to the workload, but you will be able to handle it.

However, if you currently spend most of your time sitting in front of a screen, and rarely make time for exercise, you will struggle with the transition to being a full-time driver. To prepare your body you should get out for a long walk each day. Going for a short run or bike ride several times a week will also help your transition to being a full-time driver.

**If you have knee pain, injuries from the past, arthritis, shortness of breath walking up a flight of stairs, or any other physical limitation, you shouldn't consider this job. You might be able to perform it for a day or a week, but eventually it will wear you down and every day will be a misery for you.**

If you can jump out of the van, run up a flight of stairs or a steep driveway with no problem, then you will likely do well at this job. You don't have to run to perform well, but running is an indicator you will be able to handle the physical activity.

New delivery drivers often lose a lot of weight in their first six months as their body adapts.

# Problem Solving Skills

Amazon delivery drivers constantly make small decisions and solve problems. Your ability to quickly recognize problems and then solve them is part of being a good delivery driver. This is what keeps the job interesting. There is always some problem to figure out. Here are some of the common problems drivers face:

**GPS navigation** - drivers use the Amazon Flex app on their work phone to navigate from one delivery to the next.

**Package delivery problems** - Finding a safe place to leave the package so the customer receives it.

**Network connection issues** - Sometimes there is no network connection and you will have to depend on the map on your phone instead of turn-by-turn directions.

**App problem solving** - Sometimes there are problems with the phone or Flex app and you will have to figure out how to solve them. This could involve restarting the app or phone, moving to a location with a stronger signal, or calling dispatch or customer support.

**Customer service** - Customers leave notes with instructions on where to leave packages. You sometimes must answer customer questions about how to return a package or contact Amazon.

## Downsides of being an Amazon Driver

- It can be physically tiring getting in and out of a delivery van for 8 to 10 hours a day, four days a week.
- You must deliver no matter what the weather is. Very few days are called because of weather.
- Large loads can feel overwhelming.
- Amazon continually changes how they do things. If you like consistency, and don't like constant change, you may not be happy working as an Amazon driver.

## About Delivery Service Partners (DSPs)

Amazon doesn't hire drivers directly. Instead, they contract with separate companies called Delivery Service Partners, or DSPs.

Most DSPs are small companies whose only customer is Amazon. Amazon has a selection process for DSP owners and provides them with the backing and expertise to form their companies and get them started.

Amazon sets standards which DSPs must follow, such as working hours, safety compliance and vehicle maintenance.

**If you want to deliver for Amazon you must be hired by a DSP that has a contract with Amazon.**

Amazon pays DSPs for each route. They do not get paid specifically for dispatchers or operations managers. Amazon offers a central dispatcher service but most DSPs supply their own dispatchers.

A typical DSP will have 1 owner, an operations manager, 3-5 dispatchers, 50-100 drivers, and other drivers that split duties between driving and maintenance and training.

A small DSP will have 18 to 25 routes each day during regular season. A large DSP might have 50 or even more routes each day.

Some DSPs might work out of several different stations or cities. Amazon has more recently been limiting new DSPs to one station each.

## Flex Drivers

Amazon has a separate program for delivery called Flex. Think of Flex as Uber for Amazon. They are an on-demand network of drivers who use their own vehicles to deliver packages. Most Amazon stations have a local network of Flex drivers who handle overflow from DSPs.

Flex drivers use the same Flex app that DSP drivers do to navigate their route. Being a Flex driver is a great way to test out whether you might like being a full-time Amazon delivery driver.

## How to Apply to Drive to an Amazon Delivery Partner (DSP)

- Amazon has a jobs list for DSPs  
<https://dspdrivers.jobs.net/>

- Many DSPs also list jobs on [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) but they are often only listed for a few hours at a time.
- Contact a DSP directly.
- Get a referral from somebody who already works at a DSP.

## What to look for in a Delivery Service Partner (DSP)

There is more than one Delivery Service Partner at each Amazon delivery station, so you have a choice of which DSP to apply to. Each DSP has their own culture, but they are more similar than different. Some key differences are whether they pay for bonus hours, how often you get raises, promotion opportunities, and culture.

### Bonus Hours

Amazon pays DSPs for each route and each package delivered, regardless of how long it takes. The routes are supposed to be able to be completed in a normal 10-hour work day with a 30-minute lunch and two 15-minute breaks, plus load and drive time. Most drivers finish their route and return to the station in less than 10 hours. **The difference between the actual work time and the 10 hours of scheduled time is known as bonus hours.** Some DSPs only pay for hours actually worked. Some DSPs pay drivers for the bonus hours too. So even if the driver returns to the station in 8 hours they get paid for 10 hours.

### Rescues

A rescue is when another driver helps you finish your route. Getting a rescue is a normal part of the job as dispatchers try to spread the work more evenly through the day. However, sometimes a driver has to be rescued because they are behind and in danger of not finishing within 10 hours. Amazon has a work limit of 12 hours for each day and penalizes DSPs if they go over that time. Also, DSPs don't want to pay overtime because

that is taken out of what they are paid by Amazon for completing a route. Amazon doesn't pay DSPs more if it takes them longer to deliver. Instead, the DSP is expected to manage their day so no drivers take too long.

This brings up one of the key contentions between drivers and DSPs. Drivers who complete their routes faster may be asked to rescue more. Some drivers figure out that going slower gets them rescues. There are several different ways DSPs handle rescues and this might make a difference to where you would prefer to work. For example, some DSPs let the faster drivers go home when they are finished, if they had a regular, full load. In this case rescues are usually performed by drivers with lighter loads, even if they take longer.

Some DSPs may pay only for hours worked and getting rescued may mean you work fewer hours. There are some DSPs that create a competitive situation that rewards the fastest drivers with more hours through rescuing.

## Pay Scale

The pay scale for drivers is mostly determined by how much Amazon pays DSPs for routes in their area. Areas with a higher cost-of-living have higher hourly pay. Most areas have a pay range of \$15 to \$18 an hour. Because Amazon does not increase the amount they pay the DSP for each route, there is a practical cap on a driver's pay rate, no matter how long they have been there. Many DSPs give small raises at 6 months and a year of service. Some DSPs never give any raises to regular drivers.

The best way to get a pay increase at a DSP is to take on more responsibility as a dispatcher, maintenance help or trainer. If you are interested in leadership roles you should ask during the interview how the DSP selects their dispatchers and if there is a different pay scale for them. Some DSPs don't pay dispatchers more than regular drivers.

## Number of Routes

More routes each day is an indicator of a healthy DSP. If a DSP only has 20 routes each day that may mean Amazon isn't happy with them, or they are a relatively new DSP. A new DSP will usually start with 5-10 routes and Amazon will slowly increase that throughout the first year.

## DSP Organization

Every DSP is different, but most have this basic organization:

Owners

Operations Managers

Dispatchers

Drivers (DA)

## Van types

Through the years Amazon has used several different types of vans. The branded vans are leased to the DSPs and include

- Large, high-ceiling vans with shelves, usually Dodge Promasters or Mercedes Sprinters.
- Step vans
- Rental vans which DSPs rent for peak times so they don't have to pay for vans they don't use.

A well-managed DSP will only have as many vans in the lot as they use.



## Peak Season

We all know the busiest time at Amazon is from October through December. November and December are called Peak Season and Amazon spends months getting ready for this high volume time. DSPs can more than double the number of daily routes they run during peak season. This is also the only time of year that Amazon authorizes and pays DSPs for overtime. They also allow working up to 6 days a week (usually 4) to reduce the number of drivers that have to be hired for peak season.

DSPs begin hiring for peak season as early as August. In some years Amazon will increase routes early to give more drivers experience to be ready for Peak season.

Everybody's goal is to have full vans with trained and capable drivers in November and December. Hiring usually drops off in Peak season and into January and February.

Usually sometime in January the number of routes drop dramatically and DSPs lay off drivers. However, a lot of drivers burn out during peak season and quit in the subsequent months. If you can make it through January you can usually stick for the rest of the year if you want to.

## Van maintenance

Amazon tracks van maintenance closely and grades each DSP on keeping the vans in operating condition.

Each morning during load out Amazon inspects vans and can ground them.

Drivers are asked to report damage and maintenance needs each day.

Vans are constantly being taken to get oil changes and new tires. DSPs will often make small repairs such as headlights, door handles and steps themselves.

# Scorecard

Amazon scores each DSP on a variety of metrics and rates them Fantastic Plus, Fantastic, Great, Fair or Poor. DSPs receive bonuses from Amazon for a Fantastic rating. Some DSPs are more focused on these metrics than others. A well-run DSP is more likely to care about their scorecard. **A good question to ask a DSP is what their scorecard rating was the past few weeks.** How they answer might give you insight into how they run their business.

# Training

When you are hired and pass the background check and drug test you will be scheduled for Amazon training. Depending on the station, you will probably attend on-site training for two days. The first day is all about what you will do as a driver (many of those things are covered in this document and you will have a head start by reading this). There is a test at the end of the first day which is easy if you listen closely during class. The second day of training class is usually driving a van in the parking lot and watching load out in the morning.

You will be paid for the hours you attend training class.

# What is a Route?

A route is a group of deliveries assigned to one driver for a day.

Drivers may have the same one or two routes for a few months, or they might have a different route each day.

DSPs are assigned an area and usually all of their routes are in that area each day so their drivers can help each other.

Delivery locations are relatively close to each other, with most stops within a minute of each other.

The DSP posts a roster for the upcoming day and Amazon assigns a route to each rostered driver based on affinity and need. DSPs are encouraged not to change who is assigned to each route, but if a driver calls out they will have to make changes.

## Package Sorting and Organization

Amazon handles the organization of your packages. Trucks from warehouses arrive at the station during the night and Amazon employees sort them into bags (totes) in the order you will deliver them. Station workers often begin their shift at midnight and work sorting thousands of packages so they are ready when you arrive to begin your route. You scan the bags and oversize packages and load them onto your van in the order you want. Other delivery services like FedEx put more of this organization responsibility on their drivers.

## Load Out

Most stations allow 15 minutes to load your van with all the bags full of packages and oversized boxes you will deliver that day. Amazon places your bags on carts in a particular order so you can be smart about loading your van. They give each DSP a pick sheet of all the routes which lists all the bags and where the carts can be found. In training Amazon teaches a concept called Last In, First Out, or LIFO. This refers to putting the bags that contain the packages for your last stops in your van first and in the back of the van. Many stations load from the back of the van though and LIFO doesn't really apply.

so you know which is the first bag and can load your van with packages for the first stops in the front of your van so you can get to them easily.

## Ride Alongs

Once you go through the two-day Amazon training class most DSPs will assign a ride-along day for you to observe an experienced driver and learn how to deliver. A good ride along will allow you to perform deliveries, organize packages and drive. It should expose you to many different situations, like delivering to businesses, apartments and lockers. How to contact a customer,

When the pandemic began Amazon discouraged ride alongs, but most DSPs have begun doing them again because they are the best way to learn.

## Nursery Routes

Your first two weeks (8 work days) will be Nursery routes. These are smaller routes closer to the station that have fewer packages and stops to give you time to learn the job. The first week is Nursery Level 1, which is 50% of a normal route. The second week is Nursery Level 2, which is 65% of normal. You will still have the 10-hour day to complete your Nursery Route. These first two weeks are a good way to learn the job with lighter loads and less pressure.

## Driver and Delivering Monitoring

Amazon has focused more and more on safety monitoring. It is a way for them to reduce costs and increase efficiency, as well as keep drivers safe. They track your deliveries using the Flex app and your driving with the Mentor app. They have also installed

Netradyne Driveri dash cams in most vans. There are also GPS devices in each branded van to help them find and recover missing or stolen vans. Most of these metrics get reported back to Amazon and your DSP and impact the DSP Scorecard.

## **Amazon Flex app**

Amazon has created a phone app called Flex which drivers use to manage their deliveries. You are assigned a route each day and when you login to Flex that route appears in the app. As you load your van you scan each bag and oversized package into Flex. Then Flex acts as a GPS navigation (like Google Maps or Waze) to guide you to each delivery. You use Flex to scan each package at the door, take a picture, contact the customer, call support and manage your deliveries through the day. The Flex app uploads all the delivery and progress data to Amazon as you go through your day so your DSP can monitor your progress and help solve problems you might encounter. This is the same app that Flex drivers use for their deliveries too.

## **Mentor app**

Amazon requires all drivers to use the Mentor app to monitor their driving through the day. Mentor detects acceleration, speeding, hard braking, hard cornering and phone distractions as you drive. It computes a score for your driving and reports that back to Amazon and your DSP. If you drive smoothly, don't speed, take corners slowly and don't touch your phone while driving your score will be fine.

## **Netradyne Driveri Dash Cam**

Amazon has recently begun using Netradyne Driveri dash cams that look forward at the road and back at the driver. It monitors stop signs and stop lights, turn signals and driver actions. It gives coaching signals if you roll through stop signs, take your eyes off the road, and warns of speeding. It does not record video of you as you drive.

## Customer Delivery Feedback

When a package is delivered to a customer they receive an email from Amazon asking them to rate their delivery experience. They can choose "Delivery Was Great" or "Delivery Was Not So Great" and choose a reason why. This feedback is reported anonymously on the weekly Customer Delivery Feedback Report.

## Picture report

At most deliveries the driver takes a picture of the package which gets sent to the customer along with the delivery notification. These pictures are analyzed by an Amazon computer program which checks that the picture is clear as well as some other picture quality checks. This data gets aggregated into a weekly Picture on Delivery (POD) report.

## Geofence Location

There is a GPS circle around each expected delivery location in the Flex app to help you deliver to the correct door. It also is a way for Amazon to monitor where you scanned and delivered the package to help troubleshoot missing or mis-delivered packages.

## Culture and Work Environment

One of the unfortunate things about delivering for Amazon is it is very bureaucratic. There is a culture of being told to do things a certain way by Amazon, but DSPs doing something else because the reality is Amazon doesn't deliver packages and sometimes seem disconnected from the actual task.

There is a lot of "I know you were told to do it that way but we do it this way."

You will be working at a Delivery Station that is staffed by Amazon employees. The DSPs have small work areas in the station.

The most important qualities, beyond just physically being able to do the job, is reliability and responsibility. Show up for work on time every day, communicate if you run into problems, and be willing to help the team get all the packages delivered each day.

Hopefully this guide has given you a better understanding of what it is like to be an Amazon delivery driver and whether it is something you would like to do.