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Instacart shoppers say company's response to strike demands is 'insulting'

Megan Rose Dickey

9:16 AM PDT · March 30, 2020

Over the weekend, [Instacart outlined](#) its plans to better support shoppers amid the COVID-19 pandemic. For starters, Instacart has begun distributing its own hand sanitizer and disinfecting supplies and is

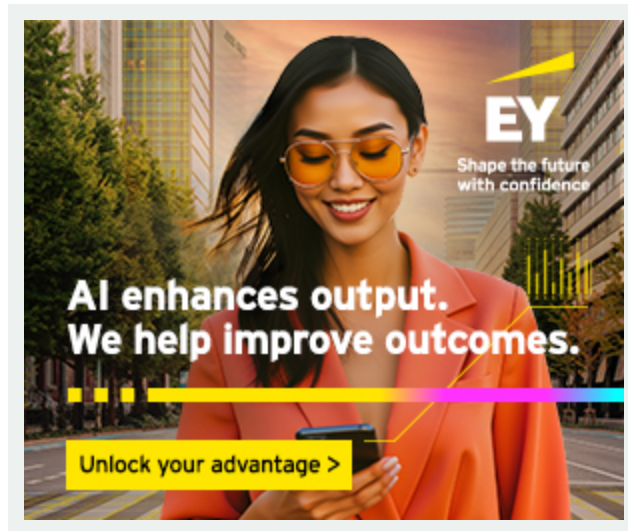


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Instacart has changed the default tip setting to reflect a customer's previous tip amount.

But organizers of the massive Instacart strike, which starts today, say it's not enough. Gig Workers Collective, the organization spearheading the strike, calls Instacart's response "insulting and "a sick joke."



For example, Instacart shoppers had been asking for hand sanitizer for weeks, according to Gig Workers Collective.

"It's abhorrent that it took this long for them to act, but on the bright side, it shows that a strike will work to change their behavior," [the group wrote in a Medium post yesterday](#).

Regarding the tip amount, Instacart shoppers have long demanded the company change the default tip amount to 10%. While Instacart has changed the default, shoppers say the new default "will, in all likelihood, provide no meaningful benefit to shoppers," as customers' previous tip amounts were guided by the 5% default.

Meanwhile, two demands went unaddressed: hazard pay and sick pay for workers who must stay at home because they are at high risk of contracting the respiratory illness.

[Instacart shoppers laid out their demands on Friday](#), asking that Instacart

pay of \$5 extra per order, change the default tip to 10%, extend the sick pay policy to those who have a doctor's note for a pre-existing condition that may make them more susceptible to contracting the virus and extend the deadline to qualify for those benefits beyond April 8th. Shortly after those demands went public, Instacart immediately laid out plans to extend financial assistance through May 8, 2020.



“Within days of the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S., we rolled out retroactive sick pay for in-store shoppers nationally and extended pay for all shoppers affected by COVID-19,” Instacart President Nilam Ganenthiran said in a press release. “We were the first company to launch ‘Leave at My Door Delivery’ to give our customers and shoppers a safer, more flexible delivery option. Last week, we announced a new COVID-19 bonus to increase pay as Instacart shoppers step up as household heroes for customers. And now, we’ve sourced, manufactured, and are distributing our own hand sanitizer in an effort to expedite distribution lead times and work around supply chain shortages. Our teams will continue to operate with a sense of urgency on creative solutions to help ensure Instacart shoppers have access to health and safety supplies as quickly as possible.”

Shoppers have said those efforts have not been enough and they're saying it again. That's why shoppers are still striking in the hopes Instacart will meet all of their demands. The plan is to strike and not return to work until all of their demands are met.

Instacart shoppers' strike comes as legislators throughout the nation are pushing for more gig worker protections. In San Francisco, supervisors are asking the SF Office of Labor Standards Enforcement to establish enforcement procedures in compliance with Assembly Bill 5, which outlines what types of workers can be legally classified as independent contractors. The supervisors are also asking for both SF City Attorney [Dennis Herrera](#) and California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to seek injunctive relief to prevent misclassification of workers as they seek paid sick leave and unemployment insurance. Nationwide, [Congress passed a \\$2 trillion stimulus package](#) that provides gig workers with unemployment insurance.



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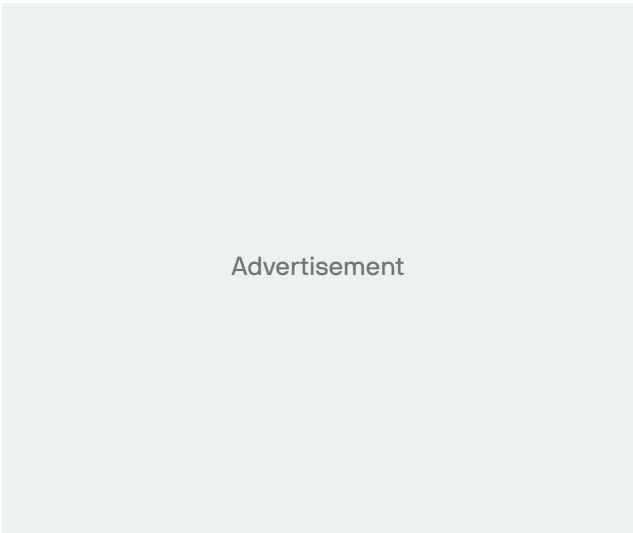
Megan Rose Dickey

Senior Reporter

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Megan Rose Dickey is a senior reporter at TechCrunch focused on labor, transportation, and diversity and inclusion in tech. She previously spent two years at Business Insider covering tech...

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