

GOOGLE WORKERS HAVE VOTED TO UNIONIZE

With the vote, the workers join a growing movement to unionize at Silicon Valley giants including Apple, Facebook, and Yahoo.

The 151 workers had sought to unionize because of what they described as poor working conditions, such as lack of ventilation, low wages, poor benefits, harassment to work faster and with damaged equipment, cracked floors, and failing electrical systems, according to an official Teamsters announcement. Another main complaint is that Adecco, the outside staffing agency employing the workers, makes them sign contracts that limit their employment to two years with the company.

“It’s surprising that workers who warehouse and ship for Google Express would be subjected to such Third World conditions,” Rome Aloise, international vice president and principal officer of Teamsters Local 853, said in a statement.

Based in San Leandro, Calif., Teamsters Local 853 already represents some workers at major local tech companies including commuter shuttle drivers for Facebook, Apple, and Yahoo. This is the latest push by workers in Silicon Valley to get better employment terms from companies that shower their engineering teams and executives with high salaries and perks like unlimited paid vacation, but not low ranking workers.

Google Shopping Express recently got a new chief, Brian Elliott, and a revamping of the service is likely underway. On Friday, Re/Code reported that Google had notified vendors of the closing of its hubs on June 30, before the workers announced their plans to unionize.

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