

LSG Sky Chefs

FAIL

Not up to the LA standard

Every day, over 500 workers at the LSG Sky Chefs airline catering kitchen at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) cater flights departing for all over the world. But while a first-class ticket for a Sky Chefs catered flight on Korean Air from LAX to Seoul might cost \$8,537, workers who prepare the food report poverty wages, unsafe working conditions, and problems in kitchen facilities.

In recent weeks, workers have filed multiple complaints against LSG Sky Chefs:

- On July 14, LSG Sky Chefs drivers filed a California OSHA complaint alleging the company violates CalOSHA regulations as codified under sanitation and heat exposure provisions of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations.
- On August 4, workers filed a complaint with the City of Los Angeles for alleged violation of the city's Minimum Wage Ordinance sick leave policies.
- Based on surveys of 243 LSG Sky Chefs workers, UNITE HERE filed a complaint with the Environmental Health Division of the Los Angeles Department of Public Health on August 23 regarding spoiled food and insects.
- LSG Sky Chefs has failed to meet the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Requirements set by LAX. From December 2016 to April 2017, workers and community members attended the LAX Board of Directors meetings to inform the Board of the violation and give testimony about the negative health impacts of ground vehicle fuel emissions.

At LAX, LSG Sky Chefs airline clients include American Airlines, Korean Air, Air New Zealand, El Al, Qatar Airways, Alaska Airlines, SAS and Air Canada.

This report summarizes findings from interviews and surveys with LSG Sky Chefs workers at LAX, public records obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests, and multiple years of OSHA logs.

Workers file California OSHA complaint

Drivers who cater flights at the remote American Eagle terminal at LAX filed a complaint with California OSHA on July 14, 2017. The complaint against LSG Sky Chefs alleges that the company violates CalOSHA regulations as codified under sanitation and heat exposure provisions of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations.

Operating at this remote location presents multiple hazards due to lack of readily accessible restroom facilities and continued exposure to high heat conditions, both outdoor when operating on the tarmac and indoor for those working inside the storage containers the company has installed as a staging area.

"Sometimes I wait all day to go to the bathroom. I don't drink much water... It's a tactic I use so that I don't have to go to the bathroom very much. But it's bad for me, not to drink liquids all day." LSG Sky Chefs Worker

One driver who has worked for LSG Sky Chefs for over a year describes that there are no bathrooms available in the work area, and that he and others have to cross the tarmac in order to access the nearest bathroom inside the commuter terminal. In order to cross the tarmac workers have to wait for the planes to pass, otherwise they can be “sucked into the engine.” Because of the difficulty of accessing the bathroom and the unpredictability of flight schedules, workers report having to wait for up to 6 hours to use the restroom. Though water is available, 4 workers reported not hydrating enough because of the difficulty of accessing the restrooms. One worker reported on occasion peeing into a coffee cup in his truck because of being unable to go to the restroom.

“Many times we have to rush to service the flights and I have to do things like pee in a coffee cup that I have in the truck because we get disciplined if we cause a flight to be delayed.” LSG Sky Chefs Driver

Workers at this location also work in extreme heat conditions throughout the day. There is no shaded place where the workers can take a break to cool down. When they have a few minutes to take a break, they often have to stand on the hot tarmac in full sun. The drivers can go inside their trucks, but the temperatures are hotter inside the trucks, which may not have adequate ventilation or air-conditioning. Driver helpers who assemble the food carts work inside the container for the duration of their 8 to 10 hour shifts. Temperatures inside the container are hotter than outside the container, and there is limited and inadequate air circulation inside the container.

Some workers have reported feeling tired and weak after working in the heat all day, and feeling muscle pain in their legs and lower abdomen. All of these symptoms can be symptoms of heat exposure.

In addition, an analysis of OSHA logs from 2013 through 2016 also revealed that collectively, LSG Sky Chefs employees at LAX **missed a total of 185 work days** in 2015 because of **workplace injuries**. In 2016, employees had **911 work days affected by their workplace injuries**.

In 2016 over **31%** of incidents logged involved **back neck or head injuries**. In 2016 over **41%** of incidents logged involved employees being hurt by **carts and racks**.

Working conditions in the kitchen

On August 23, UNITE HERE filed a complaint with Environmental Health Division of the Los Angeles Department of Public Health. In a survey of 243 LSG Sky Chefs workers from March to April 2017, 48 percent reported witnessing overflow of compost machine or sewage, and 30 percent reported evidence of rodents, insects, or birds.

In 2017, employees have also reported the following conditions in LSG Sky Chefs’ LAX kitchen:

“I have been given spoiled lettuce to assemble the food. When I reported it, I was told to look through the container and pull out the best parts and use that.”
“In the area where I work there is a mosquito problem, they sometimes fall in the food or pastries, and they are very small and hard to see. We have told the supervisors, but they have not solved the problem.”
“The dishwashing machine gets clogged and it starts smelling really bad, and water comes out.”
“The dishes come out pretty dirty from the dish room. They have dried food on them, and they smell very bad.”

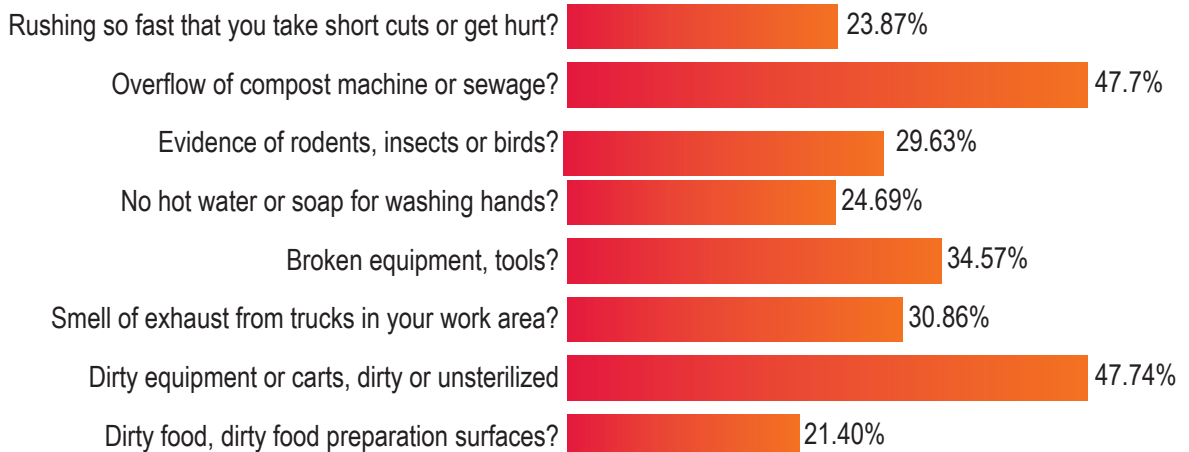
Among 103 employees surveyed in 2017 who work in the cold and hot food

departments, 16.5 percent had seen spoiled food or poor condition of food in the previous 12 months and 14 percent had seen the use of expired or spoiled food in dishes. Results from 243 employees across all departments at LSG Sky Chefs LAX kitchen

and 90% of particulates around the LAX airport are the result of ground access vehicle traffic. These air pollutants are strongly connected to increases in cases of asthma, respiratory disease, and heart disease.

**In the past 12 months have you seen/experienced any of the following at work?
(All departments, 243 employees)**

 **YES**



are in the chart below.

Failure to meet LAX environmental standards

LSG Sky Chefs has failed to meet the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Requirements set forth by the airport administration. The LAX Alternative Fuel Vehicle Requirement Program states that 100 percent of vehicles operated by any airport contractors, lessees, or licensees shall be alternative-fuel vehicles, or comparable emissions vehicles by January 31, 2015. However, as of July of 2016, only 2 vehicles out of LSG Sky Chefs' 16-vehicle fleet were in fact clean energy vehicles that complied with program requirements.

LAX is the sixth busiest airport in the world, and is the largest source of carbon monoxide in the state of California. According to a 2008 study, 42% of nitrogen oxides, 63% of volatile organic compounds,

On December 1, 2016 workers of LSG Sky Chefs and members of the surrounding community testified before the LAWA board of commissioners about LSG Sky Chefs' non-compliance with airport policies, and about the significant health impacts they experience due to prolonged exposure to air pollution. "When I have an asthma attack, my throat closes and I feel like I can't breathe," shared one community member. "Please remember that it is all of us who work at the airport and live near the airport that are being affected. When companies like LSG Sky Chefs violate these rules, we are the ones who are affected."

Alleged Violation of LA Minimum Wage Ordinance

On August 4, workers filed a complaint with the City of Los Angeles for alleged violation of the city's Minimum Wage Ordinance paid

sick leave policies. Workers at LSG Sky Chefs have been disciplined for taking their mandated sick days.

Under the Los Angeles Minimum Wage Ordinance rules, an employer with 25 or more employees must provide at least 48 hours, or 6 days, of sick leave per year. Employers are required to provide sick leave upon written or oral request from an employee. It is against the law to retaliate against the employee for exercising their rights to sick leave.

LSG Sky Chefs management gave verbal and written warning to an employee who left work after showing visible signs of

illness – vomiting on the job. The worker asked to speak to management after feeling ill when reporting for work. He was told no management or supervisors were available, and made to cater a flight while visibly ill because no one else was available to cover for him. After catering the flight, the employee went home. A few days later he was verbally disciplined and written up for using a sick day even though he had not reached the 6 days minimum guaranteed under the Minimum Wage Ordinance.

In 5 other cities, Seattle, Miami, Denver, San Diego, and San Francisco, LSG Sky Chefs is allegedly violating state and local wage laws in with total lost wages estimated at over



UNITEHERE!

UNITE HERE represents the majority of contracted airline catering workers in the United States. The union represents over 15,000 airline catering workers, employees of Gate Gourmet, Flying Food Group and LSG Sky Chefs, at 51 airports across the country.