

## Silicon Valley's workforce is feeling more burned out than before the pandemic with nearly 70% reporting work-from-home exhaustion

- Silicon Valley's workforce is reporting feeling more burned out than before the pandemic.
- A new survey from anonymous workplace chat app Blind found that 68% of tech workers feel more burned out than they did when they worked at an office.
- That number is higher than it was in February, when Blind found that 61% of professionals reported feeling burned out.
- While working remotely has alleviated some daily stressors like commuting, which can be particularly arduous in Silicon Valley, it's added new stress like longer hours, less work-life balance, and video-chat-fatigue.
- "All of the issues that we've heard about really paint this broader picture of a more vulnerable population and more stressed population in our workforce than we had going into this pandemic," Terri Patterson, a psychologist and principal at global risk consulting firm Control Risks, told Business Insider earlier this year.

As the coronavirus crisis stretches into the fall, Silicon Valley's workforce is more burned out than ever before.

That's according to a new survey from anonymous workplace chat app Blind, which surveyed 3,023 employees at companies like Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and Facebook. Blind's poll found that employees at some of the world's biggest tech companies are feeling more burned out than they did prior to the pandemic.

Of the total employees surveyed, 68% said they feel more burned out than they did when they worked at an office. Burnout is particularly high among employees at Google and Facebook: 79% of Google employees who responded to the survey say they're more burned out than before, and 81% of Facebook employees said the same.

Blind's findings highlight that employee burnout is getting worse, not better, as the coronavirus pandemic stretches into the fall. A study of 3,921 users conducted on Blind in February found that 61% of professionals were burned out for reasons most often related to an unmanageable workload, insufficient rewards, and a lack of control of their work. By May, that number had risen by 12%, with one in five citing fears over job security as the main factor in how they were feeling.

Other surveys have produced similar findings. Online job platform Monster found that between May and July of this year, there was a 20% increase in workers reporting symptoms of burnout, according to CNBC.

**'Not working from home, just living at work'**

Working remotely since March has alleviated stressors like the grind of a long daily commute, particularly in Silicon Valley, where people with commute times of 90 minutes or more grew, in some areas as much as 126%, between 2009 and 2017, according to a recent study by Apartment List.

But those types of daily stressors have been replaced by the existential threat of the coronavirus and secondary factors like job security and financial security, according to Terri Patterson, a psychologist and principal at global risk consulting firm Control Risks.

"Counterintuitively for some, working from home carries stressors that many people didn't anticipate," Patterson told Business Insider earlier this year. "Remote work can make it hard for people to turn off the office. They're finding it hard to have that uninterrupted time for themselves."

It's that lack of delineation between home and work that is, in part, continuing to cause burnout among workers, even after seven months of working from home. In another recent Blind survey of 5,500 users about work-life balance, more than half of respondents said their work-life balance has worsened since working from home.

"There used to be some delineation between work and home life, now it's gone," on Google employee wrote on Blind. "Not working from home, just living at work."

Beyond work-life balance, there are issues that arise for workers from just the daily toll of doing their jobs. Employees are still reporting Zoom fatigue in droves: Joan Burke, chief people officer at DocuSign, described video calls as "exhausting" in a recent interview with The New York Times. "By 7 o'clock last night, I was Zoomed out," she said.

And working from home continues to lead to longer work hours, tech workers say. The Blind poll of 3,023 tech workers found that 60% are working more hours than they were prior to the pandemic, particularly at Amazon and Microsoft, where 67% and 70% of employees respectively say they're working longer days than before. Half of Google and Facebook employees reported the same.

"All of the issues that we've heard about really paint this broader picture of a more vulnerable population and more stressed population in our workforce than we had going into this pandemic," Patterson said. "We really find that this is catching up to employees."

UNEMPLOYMENT

Region	September 2019	August 2020	September 2020	Percentage Point Change	
				1 month	12 months
San José–Sunnyvale MSA	2.3%	7.3%	7.1%	- 0.2	+ 4.8
San Francisco MD	1.9%	7.9%	7.8%	- 0.1	+ 5.9
California	3.6%	11.3%	10.8%	- 0.5	+ 7.2
United States	3.3%	8.5%	7.7%	- 0.8	+ 4.4

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Sector — September 2020	San Jose MSA	San Francisco MD	Combined Region	Percentage Change (Combined Region)	
				1 month	12 months
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>1,062,100</b>	<b>1,065,700</b>	<b>2,127,800</b>	<b>+ 0.2%</b>	<b>- 8.7%</b>
Construction	51,600	42,500	94,100	+ 2.1%	- 4.9%
Manufacturing	163,400	36,000	199,400	- 0.9%	- 5.8%
Retail Trade	76,800	71,600	148,400	+ 1.2%	- 7.0%
Information	92,100	90,700	182,800	- 1.5%	- 9.9%
Professional & Business Services	241,500	284,800	526,300	- 0.4%	- 2.1%
Educational Services	42,000	28,500	70,500	+ 0.3%	- 5.2%
Health Care & Social Assistance	126,400	110,000	236,400	+ 1.2%	- 2.2%
Leisure & Hospitality	72,400	93,200	165,600	+ 1.3%	- 35.5%
Government	92,000	120,100	212,100	+ 1.6%	- 6.8%

Note: San José MSA (San José–Sunnyvale–Santa Clara Metropolitan Statistical Area) = Santa Clara and San Benito Counties  
 San Francisco MD (San Francisco–Redwood City–South San Francisco Metropolitan Division) = San Mateo and San Francisco Counties

Source: California Employment Development Department, LMIID

LABOR FORCE & ANNUAL CHANGE

Labor Force by Metropolitan Statistical Area (U.S. High-Tech Regions)

	LABOR FORCE			UNEMPLOYMENT			UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		
	September 2019	September 2020	Change	September 2019	September 2020	Change	September 2019	September 2020	Change
<b>United States</b>	<b>164,051,000</b>	<b>160,143,000</b>	<b>- 2.4%</b>	<b>5,753,000</b>	<b>12,580,000</b>	<b>+ 118.7%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>+ 4.4</b>
Austin, TX	1,244,523	1,260,538	+ 1.3%	32,924	80,838	+ 145.5%	2.6%	6.4%	+ 3.8
Boston, MA	2,814,506	2,779,594	- 1.2%	69,829	256,644	+ 267.5%	2.5%	9.2%	+ 6.7
New York City, NY	4,055,000	3,817,500	- 5.9%	142,400	530,900	+ 272.8%	3.5%	13.9%	+ 10.4
Seattle, WA	1,740,800	1,708,700	- 1.8%	47,000	119,900	+ 155.1%	3.5%	7.9%	+ 4.4
California	19,505,800	18,761,200	- 3.8%	704,300	2,017,200	+ 186.4%	3.6%	10.8%	+ 7.2
San Diego	1,593,800	1,560,000	- 2.1%	45,800	140,900	+ 207.6%	2.9%	9.0%	+ 6.1
San Francisco	1,052,200	1,004,500	- 4.5%	19,700	78,800	+ 300.0%	1.9%	7.8%	+ 5.9
San José	1,088,200	1,054,300	- 3.1%	25,100	74,800	+ 198.0%	2.3%	7.1%	+ 4.8
<i>NOVA Region</i>	<i>801,700</i>	<i>761,800</i>	<i>- 5.0%</i>	<i>15,100</i>	<i>48,200</i>	<i>+ 219.2%</i>	<i>1.9%</i>	<i>6.3%</i>	<i>+ 4.4</i>

Note: Totals may not add correctly due to rounding

Source: California Employment Development Department, LMIID

REGIONAL LAYOFF ACTIVITY

September 2020 Layoff Events

Due to the effects of the Coronavirus shelter-in-place, layoff events for the month of September 2020 are too numerous to be displayed here in their entirety.

Layoff events: 17  
 Individuals affected: 1,202

WARN SUMMARY

Events YTD<sup>†</sup>: 89  
 Individuals Affected YTD<sup>†</sup>: 4,691  
 Individuals Previous YTD<sup>‡</sup>: 691

\* **WARN: Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification** (notice of mass layoff or closure)  
<sup>†</sup> **YTD: Year to Date** (Program year: July 1–June 30)  
<sup>‡</sup> **Previous YTD:** (Same date range as YTD, one year prior)

Note: Layoff data are preliminary and should be considered an estimate of monthly regional activity

Source: California EDD, CalJOBS: WARN database