



Written by [David Kelly](#) on July 13, 2022

Starbucks Closes Stores in Crime-ridden Blue Cities

Increasing crime, including assault, drug use, and theft, has forced Starbucks to announce the closing of 16 stores later this month in an attempt to protect its employees.

The stores marked for closure by July 31 are in “blue” cities: five in Seattle, one in Everett, six in the Los Angeles area, two in Portland, and one each in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. Employees at the stores that are closing can ask to be reassigned to other stores.

A company spokesperson told the [Seattle Times](#) that the decision on which stores to close was based on how many crime-related complaints were logged at each store and if attempts to lower those rates were successful.

In a [memo](#) to employees released Monday, Starbucks Senior Vice Presidents of U.S. Operations Denise Nielsen and Debbie Stroud said the changes are in response to store manager and employee complaints. “You’ve been open and honest with us about your experience.... You’re seeing firsthand the challenges facing our communities; personal safety, racism, lack of access to healthcare, a growing mental health crisis, rising drug use, and more. With stores in thousands of communities across the country, we know these challenges can, at times, play out within our stores too. We read every incident report you file — it’s a lot.”

The memo covered Starbucks’ reaction to employee input, which they said “directly shapes our policies, programs and benefits to ensure employees feel more supported and empowered.” Starbucks’ efforts to make the work environment safe for employees and patrons include “designing safe and welcoming stores,” “robust safety trainings,” increased benefits, and “clear policies and procedures.”

One such policy is Starbucks’ “Third Place Policy” (in reference to Starbucks being a “third place,” outside of home and work, where people can gather). This policy covers “Addressing Disruptive Behaviors procedure, when to call 911, how to engage local community resources or social services to support customers in need, protest preparedness, customer restriction procedures, and more.”

Following their “Third Place Policy” with concern for employee safety, which led to the announced closings, Starbucks noted that they would consider “Modifying operations, closing a restroom, or even closing a store permanently, where safety in the third place is no longer possible.” This is an admission by Starbucks that the soon-to-be-closed stores can no longer find reasonable and safe ways to effectively run their businesses.

If you have traveled to Seattle anytime in the last few years, you would have witnessed first-hand that its downtown area is riddled with rampant crime, illegal drug use, and homelessness.



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Ironically, in recognition of Seattle’s homelessness problem, Starbucks posted a news story on the same day as the announcement of the store closings. That story, “[We’re all one community: Starbucks Outreach Worker Program supports safe and welcoming stores, addresses homelessness,](#)” highlights how a Starbucks program successfully helped a homeless alcoholic man off the streets.

The Starbucks Outreach Worker Program, launched in 2020, is “a unique partnership between Starbucks and nonprofits that have street outreach expertise. The goal is to support retail partners (employees) while also addressing societal issues like homelessness, mental health and substance use disorder.” Starbucks designed the program “in response to partners sharing the challenges they face in high complexity markets.” It’s currently active in Seattle, Los Angeles, New York City, San Diego, Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, and Washington, D.C.

Considering Starbucks’ leftist leanings and acceptance of woke culture, it is ironic that these announced closures are all in liberal “blue” cities. And it is apparent that the increase in crime, illicit drug use, and homelessness in these cities is now affecting landmark and cornerstone business locations such as Starbucks. Their stores are hubs that all walks of life for a generation have counted on to grab a latte, meet a friend, or use free Wi-Fi. But not anymore. These closures are another warning sign that America’s socialist-run cities are not safe, nor are they utopias.



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