

San Francisco Whole Foods Closes To 'Ensure Safety' of Employees

A Whole Foods in Downtown San Francisco announced on Monday that it'd be closing its doors to "ensure the safety" of its workers, the San Francisco Standard reported. The nearly 65,000-square-foot location at Trinity Place had only been open for a year.

The grocery store had been affected by issues of drug use and crime in the area. One worker told the outlet that employees found syringes and pipes in the bathroom, prompting the store to implement a new bathroom policy in November that required guests to show a receipt to security guards before gaining access.

Seven months prior to the closure, a 30-year-old man overdosed in one of the grocery store's restrooms from a lethal drug combination of fentanyl and methamphetamine and was pronounced dead on the scene, *The San Francisco Chronicle* reported.

Sebastian Luke, a now former regular of the store, told the outlet he witnessed the body being carried out of the bathroom. He also said that over the course of his many trips to the Trinity Place Whole Foods, he saw several other incidents including a man urinating in the store and a woman walking around barefoot.

"Our neighborhood waited a long time for this supermarket, but we're also well aware of problems they've experienced with drug-related retail theft, adjacent drug markets, and the many safety issues related to them," San Francisco Board of

Supervisors Matt Dorsey wrote in a Twitter post.

I'm incredibly disappointed but sadly unsurprised by the temporary closure of Mid-Market's Whole Foods. (1/7)
<https://t.co/lthpC90xTL>

– Matt Dorsey (@mattdorsey) April 10, 2023

While violent crime in San Francisco is low, robbery and theft crimes are reportedly in the thousands each year, according to city police data. When compared to St. Louis, Missouri, which was noted as America's most dangerous city by MoneyGeek, San Francisco lags significantly behind in the rate of violent crime. However, when accounting for property crime, the two cities are only separated by a little over one data point.

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The prevalence of theft and vandalism has affected businesses throughout the city. Small business owner Denise Huynh, who owns Tay Ho Vietnamese restaurant in Oakland, described the current environment as a “war zone,” to the San Francisco Chronicle. Huynh's restaurant was victim to three break-ins in March alone.

“I'm afraid to hear my phone beep in the early morning because it's the thing I dread the most. It's one of those nightmares that keeps recurring,” she told the outlet.

Matt Meyer and Daniel Paez, the owners of Low Bar, a cocktail bar on Webster Street, told the outlet that their storefront was burglarized five times in five weeks between December and January. They said they funneled tens of thousands of dollars into security upgrades for their bar, a financial burden on top of the inevitable costs of running a business.

“We want this neighborhood to thrive,” Paez added. “We're just

trying to protect ourselves so we can continue being here.”

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