

Walmart denies report that it's taking violent video games off shelves

IGN reported this afternoon that Walmart is pulling violent video games from shelves, but the retailer confirmed to *The Verge* that it has not directed stores to remove them or halt sales. Instead, the company is removing signage, advertisements, and demos for some video games featuring violence and firearms in the wake of the El Paso mass shooting this past weekend.

"We've taken this action out of respect for the incidents of the past week, and it does not reflect a long-term change in our video game assortment," a company spokesperson told *The Verge*. "We are focused on assisting our associates and their families, as well as supporting the community, as we continue a thoughtful and thorough review of our policies."

The spokesperson reiterated that this does not pertain to removing games from shelves; games, including violent, M-rated titles featuring firearms, are still available. *The Verge* was able to confirm that one store, located in Berlin, Vermont, was still selling games like *Call of Duty*, *Red Dead Redemption II*, and other titles featuring violence and firearms.

Walmart is removing signage and other advertisements for some games

The removals of violent video game imagery at some Walmart locations comes after a mass shooting at a Walmart superstore in El Paso, Texas that left 22 people dead and 24 others injured. The shooting has revived calls to blame such violence on video games and other media, with President Donald Trump

saying in a press conference earlier this week, “We must stop the glorification of violence in our society. This includes the gruesome and grisly video games that are now commonplace.”

On Wednesday, freelance writer Kenneth Shepard shared an internal Walmart memo on Twitter that told Walmart employees to remove any signage or displays that contain “violent images or aggressive behavior” for video games, movies, or hunting videos. That resulted in inspired headlines, like this one from Vice proclaiming, “Walmart Removes Violent Video Game Signage, Still Sells Guns.”

In a tweet on Friday, however, user Erik Tyler Loudon posted a picture showing a nearly empty aisle at his local Walmart, the first indication that the sale of violent video games might have been part of Walmart’s new policy, too. This may have been the actions of one store, although it’s not clear at the moment whether Walmart locations have any discretion to set individual store policy regarding product availability.

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/8/9/20799310/walmart-denies-violent-video-games-taken-off-shelves-report-el-paso-shooting-trump>