

'Gun-Free Zone' Signs Fail to Stop Times Square Shooting

By [Cam Edwards](#) | February 09, 2024 [Story source: Bearing Arms](#)



AP Photo/Mary Altaffer

Lawful concealed carry has been banned in Times Square since shortly after the Supreme Court issued its decision in *Bruen* in June of 2022. When New York City Mayor Eric Adams signed the carry ban into law in October of that year, he [declared](#) that the prohibition meant that the millions of tourists who visit the

Manhattan landmark would not have to "live in fear or distrust that someone is walking around with a gun ready to harm them", an empty promise predicated on the idea that those who are intent on violence will somehow be persuaded to leave their guns behind because the city says so.

The prohibition (along with New York's refusal to recognize any out-of-state or upstate permits) has simply ensured that lawful gun owners are disarmed and unable to defend themselves with a firearm when criminals whip out their illegally possessed guns and [start shooting](#).

A suspected shoplifter shot a tourist in the leg inside a Times Square sporting goods store and then fled into the street, stopping to shoot at a pursuing police officer who could not return fire because of the evening crowds, police said.

The tourist, a 37-year-old woman, was expected to recover after Thursday's shooting in New York City. It prompted a huge police presence and search that temporarily closed streets in the area, which draws thousands of people daily.

The shooter, described by police as a male between 15 and 20 years old, was still at large Friday.

"We are looking for one male. He is the shooter," Chief of Patrol John Chell said at a news conference at the scene Thursday. "He shot at our cops not once but twice, and also shot an innocent female one time in the leg."

This is exactly what Adams said *wouldn't* happen once the "gun-free zone" signs went up around Times Square. As it turns out, tourists still have every reason to fear that armed and violent offenders are walking around ready to harm them. They just can't shoot back if they're targeted, either intentionally or because of the crook's bad aim.

Has this policy made anyone safer, besides the thugs who can scurry off into the subway system (another "gun-free zone" created after *Bruen*, by the way) to make their escape

after shooting a stranger and blasting away at police? Absolutely not. This isn't the first shooting to take place in Times Square since Adams declared the area off-limits to lawful carry, and it won't be the last. When a 22-year-old was shot and killed outside of a Shake Shack last February, the *New York Times* found [plenty of skepticism](#) from Times Square workers and visitors about the policy and its impact on public safety.

“People feel emboldened to carry guns on the street,” said Tom Harris, a retired New York police inspector and the president of the Times Square Alliance, which promotes businesses and coordinates major events. “A gun-free zone is not going to stop a criminal from carrying a gun,” Mr. Harris said.

... Ross Hallock, a 48-year-old lawyer, was walking from his apartment to the gym on Thursday evening when he saw paramedics giving aid to the shooting victim.

“Nobody seemed to care, thousands of people were walking past,” Mr. Hallock said. “A couple of people stopped to watch, but most people were just walking right past him.”

Mr. Hallock said that when he walks to the grocery store on 43rd Street, he often sees people making drug deals, apparently unconcerned about being arrested. The problem, he added, had “gotten much worse since 2020.”

“They’re not even really hiding it,” he said. “I personally am not frightened because I’m a man and I’m not small but this area is very dangerous now.”

Ibrahim Md, who runs a newsstand around the corner from the Shake Shack, was working when he heard gunshots Thursday night. He shut the door and stayed inside his stand until police officers came and told him it was safe to leave.

“It’s scary, still,” Mr. Md said. He has worked at the stand for five years, but crime has gotten worse recently. Still, he said, he remains in Times Square.

“What can I do?” he said. “That’s my job. I do it.”

The mayor's response to that shooting was typical anti-gun nonsense, declaring the violence "underscores the need to ensure Times Square remains a sensitive location" instead of acknowledging that the law failed to prevent a murder from taking place. I'm sure we'll hear something similar from Adams this time around; the failure of the "gun-free zone" is somehow evidence of its importance to public safety, not proof of its impotence when it comes to preventing violence.

The only thing this "sensitive place" designation is stopping is the lawful carrying of firearms. Criminals are operating with impunity, even [attacking](#) NYPD officers. It's the lawful citizens living, working, and visiting Times Square who are bearing the brunt of this policy, and the mayor's stale talking points, empty promises, and anti-2A policies aren't making them any safer.