



AG's Message	Ask the AG
Contact OAG	About OAG
OAG News	OAG FAQs
OAG Library	Employment
OAG Grants	Proposed Rules
OAG History	Services A-Z

Other News Pages

Governor's Office
Otras Noticias en Español (OAG)
Civil Rights (Division of)
Consumer Affairs (Division of)
Criminal Justice (Division of)
Election Law Enforcement Comm.
Gaming Enforcement (Div. of)
Highway Traffic Safety (Division of)
Insurance Fraud Prosecutor (Office of)
Juvenile Justice Commission
State Police (Division of NJ)
Law (Division of)

For Immediate Release:

April 22, 2020

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AG Grewal and Colonel Callahan Issue Daily COVID-19 Enforcement Update

TRENTON – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, announced the following recent enforcement actions related to COVID-19, including those involving individuals in violation of Governor Murphy’s Executive Orders:

Assaults and Threats Against Police Officers, EMTs, or Others

- **Daniel Lurie, 48, of Hampton, N.J.**, was arrested on April 19 by the New Jersey State Police on charges of terroristic threats during an emergency (2nd degree), resisting arrest (3rd degree), throwing bodily fluid at an officer (4th degree), obstruction (4th degree), and violating the emergency orders. State troopers were called to Lurie’s residence on a “medical assist” after Lurie called 9-1-1. When troopers arrived, Lurie was combative. He allegedly stated he had the coronavirus and spat and coughed on troopers. He was arrested and taken to the hospital.

Bias Incidents

- **Afrim Haxhaj, 30, of Jackson Heights, N.Y.**, was charged yesterday, April 21, by the Fort Lee Police Department with bias intimidation (4th degree) and harassment (petty disorderly persons offense). Haxhaj allegedly confronted a Jewish man in a Dunkin Donuts in Fort Lee on Monday, April 20, and told him to get out, saying Jews are responsible for the coronavirus. He allegedly warned the victim not to return. When the victim returned to the Dunkin Donuts yesterday, Haxhaj allegedly threatened him again, saying he does not want Jews in his neighborhood and bumping his chest into the victim. The victim left and called 9-1-1.

Other Criminal Charges Involving Indictable Offenses

- **Robert Murphy, 19, of Bayville, N.J.**, was charged by the Morris Plains Police Department and Morris County Prosecutor’s Office with attempted aggravated sexual assault (2nd degree), endangering the welfare of a child (3rd degree), and violating the emergency orders. Murphy allegedly had arranged to meet an underage girl last night, April 21, at Community Park in Morris Plains for sexual activity. He had contacted the girl through social media. The victim’s parents became aware in advance and alerted police, who arrested Murphy when he showed up at the park at about 11 p.m.

- **Tyriese J. Reddick, 30, of Gloucester Township**, was charged yesterday, April 21, by the Gloucester Township Police with four counts of burglary (3rd degree) and violating the emergency orders. Reddick allegedly broke into four vehicles in a neighborhood in Gloucester Township and took money from them. He also was wanted on warrants in the City of Camden.

Other Violations of Executive Orders, Including “Stay at Home” Order, and Ordinances

- **Newark Enforcement.** The Newark Police Department’s COVID-19 task force issued 29 summonses for violations of the emergency orders in enforcement actions yesterday, April 21.
- **Michael Masi, 47, of Branchburg**, was charged yesterday afternoon, April 21, by the Plainfield Police Department with violating the emergency orders. Police were called to Michael Anthony Auto Sales on Richmond Street in Plainfield on a report of a dispute. When police arrived, they found people in the lot shopping for a car and three customers inside attempting to buy a car. Masi said he was making “curbside auto sales.”
- **Andres Torres, 31, and Jose Nolasco, 51, of Union City**, were charged with violating the emergency orders on April 18 by the Union City Police Department. Torres owns La Roca supermarket on Bergenline Avenue in Union City. Police conducted a walk-through and found more than 50 people in the grocery store, with customers crowding around certain sections of the store. This had occurred on at least two prior occasions and the business was warned about occupancy limits. Nolasco is the store manager.
- **Shmuel Hirth, 49, Asher Jacobs, 23, Shmuel Weneintraub, 21, Pinchos Sinsky, 19, Shchomo Rosenfeld, 18, Arych Penstien, 22, Yuhuda Bronspigez, 25, and Rivka Jacobs, 47**, were charged yesterday by the Lakewood Police and Ocean County Prosecutor’s Office with violating the emergency orders. Police responded to a report of a school that was open in the first block of Drake Road. Police found a group of male students at the school who had been given permission to study there by the head of the school, Shmuel Hirth. Rivka Jacobs is the mother of one of the students, who is a juvenile.
- **Yakov Makukha, 40, Pinchos Aron, 25, Miriam Aron, 33, Yehudah Aron, 36, Tziporah Aron, 33, Yaakov Wiesner, Peninah Wiesner, 30, Ephraim Aron, 34, and Shmarya Aron, 20**, were charged yesterday, April 21, by the Lakewood Police and Ocean County Prosecutor’s Office with violating the emergency orders. Police responded to Read Place on a report of a back yard wedding. Officers found a van in the driveway occupied by two adults and three children. The driver advised that she was there for family photos for a wedding. In the back yard, there was a photographer, Yakov Makukha, photographing a family of six. Summonses were issued to all of the adults who were present.
- **Alexander Ellinson, 64, of Lakewood**, was charged yesterday, April 21, with disorderly conduct. As the Lakewood Police and Ocean County Prosecutor’s Office were investigating a report of a large gathering at a home on 8th Street, Ellinson, a neighbor, pulled up in his SUV and began yelling at police about their actions at his neighbor’s house. He continued to yell and nearly struck an officer as he drove away. Police stopped him and issued a summons.
- **William Teachen, 59, of Metuchen**, was charged yesterday, April 21, by the Metuchen Police with obstruction and violating the emergency orders, both disorderly persons offenses. An officer found Teachen riding his bicycle along the Middlesex County Greenway, a closed county park, and told him to exit the park. Teachen allegedly failed to comply and rode away. After the officer activated his siren and exited his vehicle to request identification, Teachen allegedly tried to ride past the officer, disobeyed commands, and had to be physically removed

from his bicycle. The park entrances are taped off and there are signs indicating the park is closed.

- **Dajour Clybourn, 23, of Bridgeton**, was charged yesterday by the Bridgeton Police with resisting arrest, obstruction, possession of drug paraphernalia, and violating the emergency orders, all disorderly persons offenses. Police responded to a report that Clybourn was panhandling and harassing another person. Clybourn ran away when officers arrived. When police apprehended her, they allegedly found a crack cocaine pipe in her possession.

The defendants who were charged strictly with violating the emergency orders or local ordinances and who do not face more serious charges were charged by summons— they were not arrested. Those cases will be adjudicated in municipal court.

“One month after Governor Murphy issued his emergency orders, we are flattening the curve and saving lives, because the vast majority of our residents are conscientiously obeying the social distancing rules and doing their share to fight COVID-19,” said Attorney General Grewal. “Unfortunately, there are still those who violate the orders, risking the further spread of this deadly virus. What is worse, there are some who deliberately threaten our brave police officers, medical personnel, and other essential workers, impeding their vital work. Our message to violators is that we will hold you accountable, whether it is through a summons for those who violate the social distancing orders, or an arrest on indictable charges for those who deliberately harm or threaten others during this emergency.”

“Although law enforcement and medical professionals are on the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19, we are ultimately winning the war because of the extraordinary resolve and fortitude of New Jersey citizens who are doing their part day in and day out, abiding by the executive orders and sacrificing for the greater good,” said Colonel Patrick Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police. “Those who choose to ignore the law and selfishly place others at risk will face swift law enforcement action.”

Violations of the emergency orders constitute a disorderly persons offense carrying a potential sentence of up to six months in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000. However, violators can potentially face criminal charges including second, third, and fourth degree indictable offenses.

On April 1, Attorney General Grewal announced enhanced charges against six people who were charged with assaulting and threatening law enforcement officers and violating the emergency orders. Specifically, those enhanced charges included making terroristic threats during a state of emergency, which is a second degree offense carrying a sentence of five to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$150,000. Eighteen additional defendants, including Daniel Lurie, have been similarly charged since that time for alleged assaults or threats against law enforcement officers, medical personnel, or others.

Third-degree charges carry a sentence of three to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$15,000, while fourth-degree charges carry a sentence of up to 18 months in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

The charges are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

If you are seeing a lack of compliance with the Governor’s emergency orders in your town, please contact your local police department or report here covid19.nj.gov/violation

The Attorney General’s Office and New Jersey State Police will continue to work with law enforcement throughout New Jersey to deter non-complaint behavior.

No one should take advantage of this pandemic to further their own biased agendas. COVID-19 is no excuse to promote anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and or other biased stereotypes. Please report bias crimes at **1-800-277-BIAS**.

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