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Gurbir S. Grewal
Attorney General



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For Immediate Release:

April 23, 2020

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New Jersey State Police

- Colonel Patrick Callahan, *Superintendent*

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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

- **Elvis Perez-Astacio, 25, of Union City**, was charged on April 12 by the Guttenberg Police Department with two counts of terroristic threats (3rd degree), simple assault (disorderly persons offense), resisting arrest (disorderly persons offense), possession of under 50 grams of marijuana (disorderly persons offense), being under the influence of marijuana (disorderly persons offense), failure to make lawful disposition of marijuana (disorderly persons offense), and violating the emergency orders. Police responded to a report of domestic violence allegedly committed by Perez-Astacio. When police located Perez-Astacio, he allegedly resisted arrest and verbally threatened to harm an officer. While being transported to police headquarters, Perez-Astacio allegedly said he would cough on the officers and infect them with COVID-19. He allegedly coughed throughout the trip to headquarters and while being processed.

Other Criminal Charges Involving Indictable Offenses

- **Henry Urban, 46, of Lindenwold**, was charged yesterday, April 22, by the Lindenwold Police Department with aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer (3rd degree), criminal mischief (3rd degree), resisting arrest (4th degree), criminal trespass (disorderly persons offense), obstruction (disorderly persons offense), and violating the emergency orders. It is alleged that, at about 7 a.m. yesterday, Urban purposely drove his vehicle into an unoccupied police vehicle and then into an occupied police vehicle while attempting to gain access to the gated parking lot at Lindenwold Police Headquarters. He allegedly resisted officers while being arrested.

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

- **Newark Enforcement.** The Newark Police Department’s COVID-19 task force issued 57 summonses for violations of the emergency orders and ordered two non-essential businesses closed in enforcement actions yesterday, April 22.

- **Nicholas Natale, 18, Kenneth Booth Jr., 18, Charles Thompson Jr., 19, Richard Karcher, 19, Donald Murray, 19, Jonathan Kinnerman, 20, Shawn Durst, 21, Timothy Durst-McMaster, 22, Michael Ragone, 27, Douglas Miller, 27, and Brian Schaefer, 29, all of Maple Shade,** were charged on April 19 by the Cinnaminson Police with violating the emergency orders. The group was gathered on the bank of Pennsauken Creek near Glenview Drive with a bonfire and alcohol. They used boats and wave runners to get to the location.
- **Kevin Ellerbee, 28, of Paterson,** owner of the Billiards Pool Hall in the 100 block of Market Street, was charged last evening, April 22, by the Paterson Police with violating the emergency orders. Police responded to on a report of a non-essential business being open and found the pool hall open for business with customers inside.
- **Stephen Pasternak, 23, of Morristown,** was charged yesterday, April 22, by the Morristown Police with possession of under 50 grams of marijuana and violation of the emergency orders. He was trying to visit a person at a group home without an essential purpose and was found to be in possession of marijuana. He falsely claimed to be registered to use medical marijuana.
- **Stephen Wulff, 56, of Rockaway,** was charged last night, April 22, by the Parsippany Police Department with DWI and violating the emergency orders.
- **Jonathan Santiago, 23, Janelle Best, 68, Sherman Day, 38, Rodney Stovers, 19, Godfrey Stichell, 27, and James Jackson, 27, all of Paterson,** were charged by the Paterson Police Department on April 21 with violating the emergency orders. Police were dispatched at 5:30 p.m. to Rosa Parks Boulevard and Keen Street, where they found of group of individuals who refused to disperse. They allegedly were not practicing social distancing and did not have an essential reason to be at the location.

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 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](https://www.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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