

Governor Phil Murphy

# AG Grewal and Colonel Callahan Issue Daily Update on Charges Filed Against Violators of Governor Murphy's COVID-19 Executive Orders

04/6/2020

**TRENTON** – Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal and Colonel Patrick J. Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, announced the following recent enforcement actions against violators of Governor Murphy's Emergency Orders related to COVID-19:

- **Newark Enforcement.** The Newark Police Department's COVID-19 task force issued 26 summonses for violations of the emergency orders and ordered four non-essential businesses closed in enforcement actions yesterday, April 5.
- **Rumson Party**— Ryan Sheftel, 46 of Rumson, was charged last night with disorderly conduct and violating a borough ordinance by disturbing the peace in connection with the large party and concert in Rumson on Saturday night, April 4. When officers ordered the partygoers to disperse, Sheftel allegedly cursed at the police and shouted "Welcome to Nazi Germany." Earlier yesterday, the host of the party, homeowner John Maldjian, 54, of Rumson, was charged with reckless endangerment, disorderly conduct, and two separate charges related to violating the emergency orders – all disorderly persons offenses – and violation of two borough ordinances.
- **Marco Costa**, 28, of Harrison, was charged today by police in Kearny with terroristic threats during an emergency (2nd degree), three counts of throwing bodily fluid at a law enforcement officer (4th degree), five counts of attempted burglary (3rd degree), and possession of a hypodermic syringe (disorderly persons offense). Costa was arrested after police received a report of a man fitting his description pulling on car door handles in the area. While being handcuffed, Costa allegedly told officers he had the coronavirus and purposely coughed at them.
- **Dennis Steward**, 52, of Valley Stream, N.Y., was charged on April 4 in Hamilton, Mercer County, with terroristic threats during an emergency (2nd degree), throwing bodily fluid at an officer (4th degree), and DWI. Steward was charged after he crashed into a house on South Olden Avenue in Hamilton. He was taken to St. Francis Hospital in Trenton at his request after he complained of chest pains. While there, he allegedly became aggressive and spat on hospital security guards, two Hamilton police officers, and a nurse. He claimed he had Covid-19 and had just come back from visiting someone in Bronx, N.Y., who died from the virus.

- **Derrick E. Hughes II**, 32, of Woolwich, was charged on April 5 with terroristic threats during an emergency (2nd degree), endangering (3rd degree), throwing bodily fluid at an officer (4th degree), violation of a temporary restraining order (TRO) (disorderly persons offense), and violating the emergency orders. Hughes was arrested by the Woolwich Township Police for violation of a TRO, and while being fingerprinted, he allegedly spat at officers. While being handcuffed, he allegedly breathed heavily on an officer and stated that he had COVID-19 and hoped the officers would catch it.
- **Terrance Edwards**, 34, of New Brunswick, was arrested early today by New Brunswick police after he allegedly broke into a residence while naked and armed with a knife. He left that residence and allegedly attempted unsuccessfully to break into a neighboring residence. When officers arrived, Edwards yelled that he had the coronavirus. He was charged with burglary (2nd degree), possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose (3rd degree), unlawful possession of a weapon (4th degree), and violation of the executive orders.
- **Aneka Dawkins**, 35, of Morristown, was charged by local police with violating the executive orders for holding a party at her residence with more than 10 people on Saturday night, April 4.
- **Tyeashia Henderson**, 20, of Hillside, was charged by police with violating the executive orders for holding a party at her house with approximately 20 people on Sunday, April 5.
- **Steven Nunez**, 22, of Clifton, **Tiffany Colon**, 21, of Clifton, and **Valerie Saez**, 22, of Passaic, were charged with violating the emergency orders after a West Milford police officer found them parked in a vehicle at the Clinton Road Reservoir boat launch after hours.

"Our police officers are working bravely and tirelessly every day to protect us during this health crisis. Regrettably, they are being called upon far too often to deal with people violating the emergency orders— or what is more egregious, people using the virus to spread fear or impede officers in their vital work," **said Attorney General Grewal**. "Staying home and maintaining social distance isn't just the best advice to stay healthy, it's the law. Make no mistake, we will do everything in our power to keep our residents and officers safe, and that means we won't hesitate to file charges against violators."

"Law enforcement and medical professionals are on the frontlines of this battle to protect the citizens of New Jersey from the COVID-19 virus, and we cannot stress enough how important it is that each person follow the guidelines set forth in the Executive Order," **said Colonel Patrick Callahan, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police**. "Because lives are at stake, enforcement action will be taken without hesitation against those who are blatantly placing the lives of others at risk."

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.

Last week, Attorney General Grewal announced enhanced charges against six individuals who were charged with assaulting 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 and carries a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000. Defendants Costa, Steward, and Hughes are similarly charged for their conduct against law enforcement officers.

Second-degree charges carry a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000, while third-degree charges carry a sentence of three to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$15,000. 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 <https://covid19.nj.gov/violation> (<https://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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