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Gurbir S. Grewal
Attorney General



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For Immediate Release:

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- Colonel Patrick Callahan, *Superintendent*

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

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 24 summonses for violations of the emergency orders and ordered one non-essential business closed in enforcement actions yesterday, April 13.
- **Anthony McKee, 31, Camden,** was charged yesterday, April 13, by the Camden Police with spitting on officers and claiming he had COVID-19 after he was arrested in a domestic incident. While McKee was seated in the rear of a marked police vehicle and officers were attempting to speak to him through the an open window, McKee allegedly spat on two officers and the vehicle. He allegedly stated that he had the coronavirus and that the officers were going to get it. McKee was transported to Cooper University Hospital for testing. While at the hospital, he allegedly spat on another police officer. McKee is charged with two counts of terroristic threats during an emergency (2nd degree), two counts of throwing bodily fluid at an officer (4th degree), criminal mischief (4th degree), disorderly conduct, and two violations of the emergency orders.
- **Scott P. Thompson, 45, of Stockholm,** was charged yesterday, April 13, by the Hamburg Police Department with throwing bodily fluid at an officer (4th degree), aggravated assault on an officer (4th degree), and violation of the emergency orders. Officers responded to a report of an intoxicated man and encountered Thompson, who allegedly became belligerent. When warned of the pandemic and health risks posed by his behavior, he spat and coughed on officers.
- **Jeffrey Carter, 36, Justin Kaplan, 21, Samuel Zenna, 20, Widyawati Pertusi, 47, and Deepak Kausal, 44, all of Mendham, and Richard Lee, 57, of Long Valley,** were charged yesterday, April 13, by the Mendham Police with violating the emergency orders for opening and using The Club at Mendham, a tennis and fitness club. Carter, the owner, was also charged with aiding and abetting violations of the emergency orders, a disorderly persons offense.
- **Yossi Itzkowitz, the owner, and Tzvi Blau, 29, the manager,** were charged yesterday afternoon, April 13, by the Lakewood Police Department with violating

the emergency orders for operating their toy store, Toys4U. Police found an estimated 50 or more people outside the store, with an employee taking orders at the door. The parking lot was completely filled and there were 10 cars in the fire lane in front of the store. Customers were not social distancing or wearing masks. There were 10 employees in the store who were not social distancing. Only three wore masks.

- **Mendel Steiner, 27, Dina Endzweig, 26, Johnathan Schick, 31, Hindy Schick, 32, Ephraim Weiss, 31, and Chaya Weiss, 29, all of Brooklyn, N.Y.,** were charged on Sunday, April 12, by the Lakewood Police Department with violating the emergency orders and child neglect. Israel Goldenberg, 23, of Monsey, N.Y., was charged with violating the emergency orders. Police found a large gathering of adults and children in the back yard of a house, with children playing in a bouncy castle and a long table set up with a tablecloth, plates, utensils, and chairs. A chef and two waiters were catering the event.
- **Robert Bell, 35, of Pleasantville,** was charged yesterday morning, April 13, by the Pleasantville Police with contempt (4th degree), resisting arrest (disorderly persons offense), defiant trespass (disorderly persons offense), and two violations of the emergency orders. Bell entered a Dunkin Donuts without wearing a face mask and refused to leave when asked by employees. When police arrived, Bell started walking toward a nearby Wawa store and stated he would go there instead. Bell allegedly failed to obey officers directions to stop and resisted arrest. Bell was cited on April 11 and 12 for failing to wear a face mask at two other establishments. Based on his repeated, willful defiance of the emergency orders, Bell was charged by complaint-warrant.
- **Louis Capelli Jr., 33, of Wenonah,** was arrested yesterday, April 13, by the Harrison Township Police (Gloucester County) and charged with burglary (3rd degree), theft (disorderly persons offense), and violation of the emergency orders for allegedly breaking into a vehicle.
- **John Fernicola, 68, of Brielle, and Amanda Wood, 34, of Point Pleasant Beach,** operators of Beach Amethyst Motel in Point Pleasant Beach were charged on Saturday, April 11, with four violations of the emergency orders for shutting off power to four tenants for late payments.
- **James Rodgers Jr., 57, of Trenton,** was charged yesterday, April 13, by the New Brunswick Police with defiant trespass (petty disorderly persons offense) and violating the emergency orders when he was found inside the Wellness Plaza parking deck on Patterson Street.
- **Jose Gonzalez, 20, and Gildaro Flores-Mendez, 30, both of New Brunswick,** were charged on Sunday, April 12, by the Seaside Park Police with defiant trespass (petty disorderly persons offense) and violating the emergency orders for walking and taking pictures at the Brighton Avenue beach entrance, which they knew was closed. They were with two juveniles.
- **Konstanti Apeossos Jr., 21, of Manchester,** was charged on Sunday, April 12, by the Seaside Park Police, with defiant trespass (petty disorderly persons offense) and violating the emergency orders for sitting on a lifeguard stand on the beach reading a book. He admitted that he knew the beach was closed.
- **Hiram Woods, 22, of Atlantic City,** was charged yesterday, April 13, by the Atlantic City Police Department with first-degree robbery, second-degree conspiracy to commit robbery, second-degree weapons offenses, obstruction (disorderly persons offense), and violation of the emergency orders. Woods and an unidentified man went to a residence on Caspian Avenue and asked to see one of the residents. While waiting inside, Woods grabbed money from a counter, and when a female resident tried to stop him, he allegedly pointed a gun at her head.

The men ran out of the house as the victim's boyfriend arrived. Woods also was wanted on a warrant.

- **Justin Gibson, 39, of Gibbstown**, was charged yesterday, April 13, by the Waterford Township Police with aggravated assault (3rd degree), terroristic threats (3rd degree), violation of a restraining order (4th degree), and violating the emergency orders. Gibson allegedly went to the home of his ex-girlfriend in violation of a restraining order and fought with her new boyfriend, striking the male victim multiple times with a rock and also striking him with a rake. Gibson allegedly threatened to come back with a gun and shoot people.

“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.

On April 1, 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. Defendant Anthony McKee is similarly charged for his conduct against officers.

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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