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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 34 summonses for violations of the emergency orders and ordered three non-essential businesses closed in enforcement actions yesterday, April 7.
- **Paterson Enforcement.** Police in Paterson issued 40 summonses for violations of the emergency orders and ordered two non-essential businesses closed (see below) in enforcement actions on Monday, April 6.
- **Zharia N. Young, 21, of Woodbine,** was arrested early yesterday, April 7, on a DWI charge by the New Jersey State Police after she was involved in a motor vehicle accident in Maurice River Township. During her arrest, Young allegedly became belligerent and uncooperative with troopers. It is alleged that she coughed and told the troopers she was infected with COVID-19. She said she was "happy" that she was infecting them with the virus. Young was charged with third-degree terroristic threats, fourth-degree aggravated assault on an officer, and DWI.
- **Bernadette Bisogno, 49, of Jersey City,** was charged on April 3 by the Jersey City Police with harassment (petty disorderly persons offenses), simple assault (disorderly persons offense), and violation of the emergency orders (disorderly persons offense). Detectives were assigned to investigate a possible COVID-related incident that occurred on April 2 at the Target store at 100 14th Street. Bisogno became involved in a verbal altercation at the store with another woman, with whom she had disputes in the past. It is alleged that, during the incident at the store, Bisogno purposely sneezed on the victim, leaving saliva on her clothing and skin.
- **Christopher Williams, 26, of Paterson,** was charged yesterday, April 7, with contempt (4th degree), obstruction (disorderly persons offense), and resisting arrest (disorderly persons offense). Paterson Police were called to the defendant's residence on a report of a domestic dispute. When police sought to arrest Williams for violation of a restraining order, he allegedly did not comply and

resisted arrest. While being arrested and processed, Williams allegedly told the officers that he was infected with COVID-19 in an attempt to avoid arrest.

- **Juan Ortiz, 36, of Paterson**, was charged on Monday, April 6, with violating the emergency orders and resisting arrest, both disorderly persons offenses. Paterson police responded to Deluxe Bubbles Car Wash, which was open and conducting business in violation of the emergency orders. Officers were speaking to the owner of the business, Ortiz's father, when Juan Ortiz allegedly approached and became aggressive with the officers. He allegedly refused to cooperate with officers when asked for his personal identifiers.
- **Feras Abudaya, 33, of Kinnelon**, was charged twice by Paterson Police for violating the emergency orders by opening his store, Buy and Save Furniture on Market Street in Paterson, a non-essential business. He was initially charged on Sunday, April 5, and was ordered to close the store. Police returned on Monday, April 6, and found that Abudaya was again conducting business at the store. He was issued a second summons and was again ordered to close.
- **Shakir Scott, 20, of Newark**, was charged early today in Union Township with three counts of burglary (3rd degree) and violation of the emergency orders. Scott allegedly was seen entering three parked, unoccupied motor vehicles.
- **Nathaniel Brown, 44, of New Brunswick**, was charged by the New Brunswick Police with misuse of the 911 system (4th degree) and violating the emergency orders on Monday, April 6. Brown allegedly called 911 and falsely reported a shooting on Quentin Avenue. When officers arrived, they determined that there was no shooting. Brown, who was outside, was arrested.
- **Kobe A. Kemp, 20, of Browns Mills**, was charged yesterday, April 7, by the Pemberton Township Police, with violating the emergency orders after he ignored a prior warning from police to comply with the stay at home order. Police allegedly found Kemp outside yesterday causing a disturbance with a group at the same location where he had received the prior warning.

“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. Police have charged a number of persons with second-degree terroristic threats during an emergency for claiming to have COVID-19 and threatening to infect law enforcement officers or others by coughing, spitting, or otherwise exposing them. That charge carries a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000.

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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