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Six people who coughed or spit on cops and said they had coronavirus could go to prison for years

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Spitting on cops was never a good idea, but it could now put you behind bars for a decade.

The state attorney general's office announced Wednesday that it's taking over six cases and stacking new charges against people who allegedly spit or coughed on officers while claiming to have the coronavirus.

"We take all assaults on police officers seriously, but it is especially heinous for someone to spit or cough at an officer in an attempt to infect or threaten to infect them," state Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said in a statement.

More than 380 cops have the virus, the State Police said Tuesday, and Grewal said they likely picked up COVID-19 while on patrol.

Intentionally trying to infect police is also an "assault on their family members, fellow officers, and the general public," Col. Patrick Callahan, acting Superintendent of the State Police said in a statement.

All six people now face charges of fourth-degree aggravated assault on an officer, officials said. Four also have second-degree charges of making terroristic threats during a state of emergency.

Those second-degree crimes can put you in state prison for up to ten years along with a fine of up to \$150,000, according to Grewal's office. Fourth-degree crimes can lead to 18 months and a \$10,000 fine.

The announcement came the same week cops escalated their enforcement of the governor's lockdown orders.

Officers are increasingly giving tickets to everyone at an illegal gathering, not just the host, state officials said Wednesday. Newark police have doled out hundreds of summonses the last two nights, and law enforcement agencies are partnering up to crack down on Lakewood, the site of repeated violations.