

**DEPARTMENT of
PUBLIC SAFETY**

**PUBLIC
INFORMATION
OFFICE**



**480 Clinton Avenue, 2nd Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07108
(973) 733-6008**

**Ras J. Baraka, Mayor
Brian A. O'Hara, Public Safety Director
Raul Malave III, Assistant Public Safety Director
Lee Douglas III, Chief of Police
Rufus L. Jackson, Chief of Fire**

For Immediate Release

May 3, 2021

For Further Information, Contact:

Catherine Adams, Sergeant David Dos Santos or Barry Carter

Email: pio@ci.newark.nj.us

Police Continue Crackdown on ATVs and Dirt Bikes Resulting in Weekend Recovery of 32 Illegal Off-Road Vehicles

Two Handguns Also Recovered During the Operation

Newark Public Safety Director Brian A. O'Hara reports that a total of 32 illegal vehicles have been recovered by police since the inception of a new illegal off-road vehicle enforcement initiative. And, that as part of the operation, police also arrested Al-Tamir Thornton, 19, of Newark and Taquan Williams, 26, of East Orange, for illegal handgun possession in separate incidents this weekend. One of the handguns had been reported stolen from Harrison on September 21, 2020, the other handgun had a high-capacity magazine and was loaded with hollow point bullets.

“The removal of over 32 illegal off-road vehicles and two handguns from our streets is proof-positive that this operation is a clear success,” Director O'Hara said. “And we will continue responding to the community's concerns regarding the reckless operation of these illegal vehicles. They not only threaten the safety of those operating them, but also jeopardize pedestrians and other motorists. In the same way that this illegal activity is not tolerated in other municipalities, it will not be tolerated in Newark,” he added. “We are fully committed to ensuring the highest quality of life possible for our residents.”

As part of the illegal off-road vehicle operation, which began on April 23rd, police have confiscated a total of 19 ATVs and 13 dirt bikes. Since Friday, police recovered nine ATVs and three dirt bikes, plus an additional dirt bike recovered on April 28th, when police arrested Angel Aviles, 32, of Newark, after he was observed riding in the area of Broadway and Montclair Avenue. The dirt bike was found to be stolen out of Jersey City. Aviles is charged with receiving stolen property and obstructing the administration of the law.

On May 1st, Melvin Fuentes, 28, of New York City, was arrested after police located him with an illegal dirt bike at the 600 block of Broadway through the assistance of the NPD1 helicopter. Fuentes faces charges of obstructing the administration of the law and resisting arrest. He was also issued summonses for an unregistered ATV, uninsured ATV among other motor vehicle violations.

Nine ATVs were also recovered from various locations this weekend. Three ATVs were recovered from Chester and Lincoln avenues; one was recovered from Manchester Place; one from Central Avenue and First Street; another from South 13th Street near 9th Avenue; two from South 19th Street and Avon Avenue and one from the 300 block of Springfield Avenue.

While conducting this operation, police also recovered two handguns.

On May 1st, Al-Tamir Thornton was arrested on charges of unlawful possession of a weapon, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, CDS distribution, CDS possession and receiving stolen property. As part of this incident, police recovered 14 ecstasy pills, \$217.00 and a loaded handgun that had been reported stolen from Harrison.

Taquan Williams was arrested on April 30th on charges of unlawful possession of a weapon and two counts of possession of prohibited weapons (large capacity magazine and hollow point ammunition). Prior to the arrest, Williams was observed driving in the opposite direction of traffic while speeding on 4th Avenue. He also was issued motor vehicle summonses for driving in the opposite direction of traffic, reckless driving, driving without a license, driving while suspended and other motor vehicle violations.

Newark Police have recovered a total of 215 illegal firearms this year, a 41.5 percent increase over the same period in year 2020.

The charges listed above are merely accusations. Each suspect is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



April 30-May 2, 2021 - ATVs and Dirt Bikes Recovered in Police Crackdown