

New Bedford church fined \$1,800 for violating COVID-19 protections amid isolated outbreak

New Bedford, Massachusetts— The New Bedford Health Department has issued fines to Iglesia Pentecostal Levantate y Anda totaling \$1,800 after an isolated outbreak of COVID-19 caused by the independent storefront church's failure to comply with the City's COVID-19 regulations and protections for its residents.

According to the New Bedford Mayor's office, the 1710 Acushnet Avenue church has been fined \$1,800 for failure to comply with workplace safety standards under the state's guidelines for places of worship, exceeding its occupancy limit, failure to notify the Health Department of an employee testing positive for COVID-19, failure to communicate with employees regarding symptomatic employees, and failure to report COVID-19 at the location to the Health Department.

Violation orders were issued Wednesday, September 9, to Jose Martinez, the pastor of the Iglesia Pentecostal Levantate y Anda in the amount of \$1,800.

Earlier this year, Mayor Jon Mitchell and the Board of Health announced emergency orders to keep employees safe at their place of work, and to outline reporting requirements of COVID-19 in the workplace. The orders include strong measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces.

Businesses will be subject to fines for failure to comply with the City's orders, including failure to protect employees and failure to notify the Health Department of an outbreaks. The orders can be found on New Bedford's COVID-19 webpage:

<https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/health-department/covid-19-news-2/>.