



Hermantown Police Department
5111 Maple Grove Road, Hermantown, MN 55811
218.729.1200 // cops@hermantownmn.com

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 09/19/21 to 09/25/21, the Hermantown PD had 258 calls.
The following are selected incidents HPD responded to this week.

Chief

Jim Crace

Commanders

Mark Gunderson
Jon Esterbrooks

Sergeants

Griffin Pfeiffer - K9
Jon Pernu - K9

Detective

Jake Williams
Jeff Dwyer

Officers

Jason Salo
Lisa Volk
Tim Battaglia
Jon Enright
Erika Johnson - SRO
Quinn Mischke
Olivia Gottschald
Jonathan Stracek
Andrew Leibel

K-9 Officers

Tuuko
Jack

Records

Jessica Sorensen
Dana Ross
Samantha Knapp

Assault

Just before noon on 09/25/21, a teenager reported that his 18-year-old brother came to the house and attacked him and that the altercation involved a knife and a BB gun. When officers arrived at the residence, they spoke to both parties, as well as other family members that witnessed the incident. Officers were told that the older brother had been in a bedroom and was showing his BB gun to others. The 15-year-old reporting party got angry and went downstairs, coming back with a kitchen knife. At that point, the older boy had pulled out a pocket knife, saying that he had one too. Both knives were thrown aside and the brothers began to physically fight. During the altercation, the younger boy had grabbed a claw hammer from the floor and raised it above his head as though he was going to hit his brother. Others were able to get the hammer out of his hands and the parties were separated while police responded. Officers determined that, based on witness statements, the 15-year-old would be taken into custody for 2nd degree assault and domestic assault.

Accidents

On the morning of 09/25/21, Officer Mischke responded to an accident on Loberg Avenue in front of Walmart. A 44-year-old woman was cited for a u-turn violation after causing the accident. She stated she was not from the area and didn't see the no u-turn sign, as she was looking at her GPS.

Just before 1:30 p.m. on 09/25/21, Officer Mischke was advised of an accident on southbound Miller Trunk Highway at Arrowhead Road. Both vehicles were stopped at a red light when the accident occurred. The driver of the hitting vehicle stated she took her foot off the brake and pushed the gas pedal slightly, but the car jumped forward and hit the vehicle in front of it. She was cited for inattentive driving and also for violating her driving permit, as she was only 15 and had no adults in the vehicle with her.

Theft

On 09/20/21 at approximately 1 a.m., Officer Leibel performed a traffic stop on a suspicious vehicle towing a trailer that was significantly weighed down and had a broken license plate. Officers determined that the trailer was an unreported stolen belonging to Minnesota Communications and they responded to the business' property on Arrowhead Road. There, they discovered that an excavator had been used behind several properties and the suspects had made their way to Camping World on Haines Road. The suspects caused damage to property owned by Minnesota Communications and Camping World, including the excavator, a shed and storage containers. A fence belonging to Pools of Fun was also disassembled and damaged. In addition to the \$8,000 trailer being stolen, \$10,000 worth of wire had been taken from Minnesota Communications, along with other items. The owner later advised officers that the trailer had significant damage and the wire was now worthless. At Camping World, suspects had opened a storage container and had entered campers on the property. Many items were taken, including an RV fridge, a generator, a moped, and pieces for several 5th wheel hitches. The value of the items known to be taken right after the report were valued over \$8,000. Investigators are following up with victims in order to get complete lists of stolen and damaged items. Reports have been sent to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges against two 28-year-old men for theft, possession of stolen property, possession of burglary/theft tools, and criminal damage to property. The man driving the suspicious vehicle during the traffic stop is also being charged with driving after revocation. One of the men had been taken into custody on 09/21/21 after St Louis County Sheriff's Department executed a search warrant on his residence. Both men are suspects in a number of burglaries and thefts in Hermantown, Duluth, and St. Louis County.

On 09/20/21, Officer Volk took the report of fraudulent checks. The reporting party said that 15 fraudulent checks totaling over \$52,000 cleared their corporate account between 08/22/21 and 09/02/21. She stated that some check



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were in person, some via mobile deposit, and some were mailed in. Several of the checks were for the amount of \$4,700. This is under investigation.

At approximately 8 p.m. on 09/20/21, Walmart reported a male concealing merchandise in the store. When officers arrived, they noticed a silver passenger car parked in the fire lane that did not have any plates on it. Sgt. Pernu ran the VIN of the vehicle and discovered it registered to a 27-year-old Duluth man. They also learned that the vehicle's owner was the suspect in the current shoplifting incident. A short while later, the suspect exited the store running full speed toward his vehicle. Officers stopped and brought him back inside. Officer Leibel observed surveillance footage that showed the man attempting to leave with stolen merchandise. When confronted in the vestibule, the man threw the items down before fleeing the store. The man stated he came to Walmart with a 25-year-old female with the intent of using her food stamps to buy groceries. He had selected and attempted to steal a baby monitor and handbag style cooler. In addition, the shoes on the feet were also taken during the incident. He was cited for shoplifting and parking in a fire lane before being trespassed from Walmart properties. The three items taken were valued at \$199.98. Loss Prevention requested that the female he was with also be removed from the store, as she was concealing merchandise in her purse. When Sgt. Pernu made contact with her, she accused him of harassment, claiming she was planning to pay for all the items. She had multiple concealed items including makeup, auto, and other items in her purse, which she was pushing in an empty cart. She was escorted from the store and trespassed.

On 09/23/21 at 10:30 p.m., Walmart reported a female shoplifter with 3-4 bags of stolen merchandise that fled into the woods. After a short time, Officer Battaglia located the 27-year-old woman hunkered down in the grass across from the bus stop. The woman told Officer Gottschald that she is an addict and shoplifting is how she pays for drugs. The woman had taken 32 items with a total value of \$237.08. She was cited and trespassed from Walmart properties.

Shortly after 6 a.m. on 09/24/21, a 20-year-old male reported that his vehicle had been stolen overnight from Tamarack Lane. He described the vehicle as a 2020 Ford F150 worth \$53,000 and stated he had left a spare set of keys in the truck. He said he had an app that allowed him to see where the vehicle was. He told Officer Mischke that the vehicle was at an address on 8th Avenue East in Duluth. Officers responded to the address, but the vehicle had moved to the Holiday gas station off of London Road. Officer Mischke located the vehicle at the gas pumps and was able to see the driver, identifying him as a 20-year-old man with a known history of stealing vehicles. As squads attempted to box the truck in, the vehicle fled the parking lot at a high rate of speed; due to heavy traffic, officers decided not to pursue it at that time. The victim provided updates of the vehicle's location and officers located it again near 8th Avenue East and 4th Street. At that time, a state patrol squad stopped in front of the truck. The vehicle quickly backed up and drove through an alley at a high rate of speed with complete disregard to the safety of the group of construction workers on foot in the alley. The trooper also was able to visually identify the suspect. Officer Mischke used the app to reacquire the vehicle's location and a Duluth squad observed the vehicle at the Motel 6, but it fled. Another driver reported to 911 that they were almost hit head on by the stolen truck and the decision was made to not follow the vehicle until it was parked for a significant amount of time. At approximately 10 a.m., Officer Mischke noted the vehicle was parked at a church in Piedmont. The truck was located and processed before being returned to the owner. Throughout the morning, Officer Salo took reports of vehicle prowls from several others in the Deerfield complex, as well as the report of another vehicle theft. The victim, a 29-year-old woman, stated that her 2014 Nissan Altima had been unlocked with the key fob inside. She stated that a work laptop and her work badge were inside the vehicle when it was taken. While tracking the stolen Ford pickup near Motel 6, St. Louis County Deputies located the stolen Altima. It was processed and then towed to a car dealership to be rekeyed, as the key fob was missing. Other victims reported items taken from their vehicles that included change and sunglasses. One of the victims found a red box with the word "Haiti" etched into it and a set of keys in a front yard. The keys were later returned to their owner, who advised they had been taken out of a vehicle. These cases are under investigation.