



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 10/03/21 to 10/09/21, the Hermantown PD had 161 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

Miscellaneous

At approximately 11:30 a.m. on 10/04/21, officers responded to the Econo Lodge after staff reported two adults in a room that were not waking up. The caller stated that they shook the adults in an attempt to wake them, but they didn't respond. There were also two small children in the room. When Officer Stracek arrived on scene, he had an employee let him in the room and he observed that the two adults on the bed were unresponsive when he announced his presence. A young toddler was completely naked running around and jumping on the other bed in the room. An older toddler was partially clothed running around. He noted that there was a lot of food waste and the living conditions in the room were very poor. Once he was standing over the male, the man sat up and denied being unresponsive. The man then woke the female. Officer Stracek observed on the nightstand burnt tinfoil, a lighter, and a small yellow-brown stone-like material that later tested positive for fentanyl. Officers stepped out of the room at the pair's request so that they could get dressed. When they returned to the room, Officer Stracek noted that the burnt tinfoil was missing and the 22-year-old woman was chewing on something; he told her to spit it out and determined it was three small pieces of tinfoil. Officer Leibel then entered the bathroom that the woman had exited, where he located a glass pipe in the bottom of the open toilet. After the couple was split up, the woman told Officer Stracek that she uses heroin and the man uses meth. The woman said that she was the man's girlfriend, but not the mother of the two children. During the conversation, she said that the man has the kids every other weekend and during the week, they are at school. She was unable to provide their full names or dates of birth, but stated they were 3 and 5. The man gave the kids' names, but gave dates of birth that would have made them teenagers. He then said that officers needed to call their mother to obtain the correct information. Officers were unable to contact the mother and, due to the adults' inability to properly identify the children, as well as the potentially deadly condition of the hotel room they were staying in, the St. Louis County Initial Intervention Unit was called to take custody until next of kin could be contacted. During the incident, officers located a sawzall in the motel room and other power tools in the Sienna van used by the couple, along with other drug paraphernalia. A check of the WI dealer plate on the van came back as being stolen from a Madison, WI, business. Another Wisconsin plate was located inside the vehicle and that was found to have been stolen out of Appleton, Wisconsin. While being transported to the St. Louis County Jail, the man had confirmed his identity and said he was 20 years old. He was lodged on charges of 5th degree possession of a controlled substance and possession of the stolen license plates. The woman later admitted that the man was 38 and had used a family member's information. The man's charges were amended to include gross misdemeanor false name of another. Later that afternoon, Kolar Toyota reported that a catalytic converter had been cut from a customer's vehicle and there was video showing a blue Toyota Sienna van, which matched the van used by the couple. Officers had located a catalytic converter hidden in the van and they were able to match the cut marks to the Prius it had been cut off of in the Kolar lot. Sgt. Pernu responded to the jail and added felony charges of possessing stolen property to the man's booking sheet.

Theft

On 10/05/21, just before 9:30 a.m., Fleet Farm reported a pair of shoplifters wearing masks that took power tool sets valued at over \$1500. The male and female walked through a closed register and straight into the vestibule. When loss prevention attempted to stop the suspects, they fled into the parking lot, where they got into a Kia Sportage. Officer Stracek located and performed a traffic stop on the suspect vehicle in northbound Miller Trunk Highway just north of the intersection with Ugstad Road. As he approached the vehicle, he observed a male driver matching the description of one of the suspects, as well as two females in the vehicle. The driver kept his window shut completely and as Officer Stracek attempted to make contact, he put the vehicle back into drive and took off at a high rate of speed. Officer Stracek initiated a pursuit on the vehicle, which turned southbound and cut off multiple vehicles at a crossover. The pursuit continued southbound to the Ugstad Road intersection, where the vehicle went into the right turn lane to pass all vehicles stopped for a red light. At a crossover near Galleria Bicycle, the vehicle slammed on its



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brakes and conducted a u-turn to again travel northbound. At this time, Officer Stracek attempted to perform a PIT maneuver on the vehicle, which began to swerve back and forth erratically before swerving onto the shoulder to pass a dump truck. At this time, Officer Stracek terminated the pursuit for public safety. A short time later, Officer Stracek was advised that a Cloquet officer had conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle. Officer Stracek and Detective Dwyer responded to the scene and made contact with the three occupants. A 24-year-old female was driving the vehicle at the time of the traffic stop in Cloquet. She initially said she was sleeping during the chase, but later admitted to being awake. She said after the pursuit, the man pulled over and got out of the driver's seat, then ran around the other side of the vehicle and got into the rear while she moved over to the driver's seat. The female denied knowing that the license plates on the vehicle were stolen. When the other woman in the vehicle spoke with Officer Stracek about the shoplifting incident and pursuit, she kept making excuses that she didn't know anything and was sleep. She also initially denied that they stopped in the vehicle to change drivers or license plates. The 37-year-old was advised that she was on video shoplifting. The 43-year-old declined to speak with officers. He was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for felony theft, fleeing in a motor vehicle, illegal use of plates, driving after revocation, and possession of stolen property. The man has had two convictions for fleeing a police officer in a motor vehicle and one pending charge from June 2021. Reports have been sent to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of felony theft against the female suspect.

On the morning of 10/06/21, a Miller Trunk business reported the theft of a Samsung tablet. The reporting party said that employees are assigned specific tablets and an employee noticed an incorrect tablet in their office. They then realized that tablets had been switched from different offices and one was found to be missing. The estimated value of the tablet is \$800-900. This incident is under investigation.

Just before 6:30 p.m. on 10/07/21, Fleet Farm reported that a man wearing a Carhartt sweatshirt belonging to the store removed a knife from its package and concealed it on his person before exiting the store without paying. The suspect got into a Dodge Durango in the parking lot; Officer Mischke located the vehicle and made contact with the 49-year-old suspect. In addition to the sweatshirt and knife, the man had taken a pair of gloves from the store. The total value of the items stolen was \$67.48. When he ran the vehicle's plate, Officer Mischke was advised by dispatch that it had been reported stolen from Duluth on 10/05/21. Officer Mischke transported the man to the St. Louis County Jail. Prior to entering, he located a small bud of marijuana and a bundle containing methamphetamine in the man's pocket. The man was lodged for possession of a stolen vehicle, possession of methamphetamine, and theft.

ACCIDENTS

On 10/08/21 at 3:30 p.m., Officer Salo responded to Morris Thomas Road at the intersection of Ugstad for the report of an accident involving two vehicles. A 16-year-old male driving a Toyota Highlander had been traveling east on Morris Thomas Road. A 71-year-old man driving a Chrysler Town & Country van was driving south on Ugstad; he stopped at the stop sign and continued through the intersection. He said he did not see the Highlander until it was too late. Morris Thomas Road is being repaved and there was a sign on Morris Thomas on the west side of Ugstad partially obscuring the view. The van went into the ditch and the two occupants were extricated by the Hermantown Volunteer Fire Department.

