



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

# AROUND TOWN

During the week of 03/06/22 to 03/12/22, the Hermantown PD had 143 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

### Driving Under the Influence

Shortly after 2 a.m. on 03/06/22, Officer Stracek observed a vehicle approach a red light and slide into the intersection. The vehicle then reversed back before the stoplight and waited for the light to turn green. As Officer Stracek travelled behind the vehicle, he noted that it was pulling away from him and he locked its speed at 51 mph in a 45 mph zone. The vehicle then made a right turn, slowing for a stop sign but not stopping. Officer Stracek conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle and made contact with the 31-year-old male driver and his female passenger. The man stated they were headed home from Superior. While speaking with the vehicle's occupants, Officer Stracek noted a strong odor of alcoholic beverage. The driver attempted to avoid eye contact and appeared uncoordinated. The man kept blowing cigarette smoke into Officer Stracek's face and he was asked to put it out. The driver performed field sobriety testing and provided a preliminary breath sample with a reading of .158% blood alcohol content. The man stated he thought he was okay to drive and that he would pass field sobriety testing. Because the man had two prior DWIs in the last 10 years, reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for charges of 2<sup>nd</sup> degree DWI, .08 or more, and failure to stop at a stop sign.

### Drugs

On 03/07/22 at 12:15 a.m., Officer Stracek performed a traffic stop on a vehicle with a burned out headlight. The vehicle was slow to stop and Officer Leibel cut it off to make the driver stop the car. The 49-year-old driver said he didn't have ID on him, but provided his name and date of birth, admitting that he had a petty warrant out of St. Louis County. The front seat passenger provided a name and spelled it out along with a date of birth in 1964. Using police records, Officer Stracek discovered that the date of birth was supposed to be 1966. In addition, the name provided had been used in the past as an alias and Officer Stracek used police photos to determine the real name of the 50-year-old passenger. That man had a warrant out of Blue Stone County for 2<sup>nd</sup> degree assault with a deadly weapon. The man was sluggish to respond to commands and was stubborn when asked to lift up his jacket to check for weapons. He had to be commanded over seven times to get onto his knees before he was taken into custody. During a search for weapons, Officer Stracek located a six-inch shank in his pocket. When Officer Stracek opened the rear vehicle door to make contact with the backseat passenger, he observed a holster-like object sitting in the middle of the seat and the rear passenger appeared to be concealing something in his pocket. Officers attempted to get the 43-year-old man out of the vehicle and he struggled with them, continuing to grab at his jacket pocket. After he was handcuffed, officers located a coin purse in his pocket that contained a large amount of white crystal-like substance that later tested positive for methamphetamine. During a vehicle search, officers located a handgun box, around 1000 hypodermic needles, pill bottles, and two open containers of vodka. The driver later told Officer Stracek that the two passenger knocked on his door and asked him to drive due to them being intoxicated. The driver was released and advised on his \$100 promise to appear warrant. A citation was mailed to him for driving after suspension. The front seat passenger was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail on his warrant and for giving a false name. The rear seat passenger was lodged at jail for 3<sup>rd</sup> degree possession and obstruction.

On 03/09/22 at 2:45 a.m., Officer Stracek observed a vehicle with snow covering the rear license plate. The driver and passenger were careful to avoid making eye contact with Officer Stracek. He was able to see the front plate of the vehicle after it stopped at Kwik Trip and he discovered that the 25-year-old owner had an outstanding warrant. In addition, police contacts showed that the woman was involved in a string of vehicle prowls two months prior. After performing a traffic stop on the vehicle, Officers Stracek and Leibel made



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contact with the occupants. The driver initially gave an identification card for a 47-year-old woman but ultimately admitted that it was her mother's ID and she was the registered owner of the vehicle. Through the passenger window, Officer Stracek observed a small piece of tinfoil and a tied off baggie in the door handle. As he was speaking with the passenger, the man attempted to use his knee to cover the door handle and hide the baggie. The man identified himself as the 50-year-old boyfriend of the driver and said that they had driven down from International Falls and had been at the casino in Duluth but they were now on their way home. The woman provided officers with a container of fentanyl that she stated she bought that night. During a search of the vehicle, officers located additional paraphernalia, including tinfoil, a glass pipe, an electronic scale and a drug kit. The woman told Officer Stracek that there is only meth in the area she lives and she travels to the Duluth area to get any kind of narcotics. The woman was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for 5<sup>th</sup> degree possession, false name, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

### Miscellaneous

On the morning of 03/06/22, a man reported that his wallet had been stolen in November 2021 and someone tried to use his driver's license on 03/06/22. The 33-year-old told Officer Gottschald that his friend works at U-Haul and had advised him that someone tried to use this license to rent a trailer. The employee told Officer Gottschald that when he confronted the man about having his friend's driver's license, the man took the license and left in a 2009 GMC Sierra.

Just before 2:30 p.m. on 03/11/22, Officers Salo and Battaglia were dispatched to a suspicious activity call in the 3500 block of Lavaque Road. The reporting party said that a male was trying to break out the windows of a black SUV parked on the side of the road. Officers arrived in the area and located the man walking away from the vehicle. He ignored commands to stop and continued to walk south on Lavaque toward Proctor. At this time, a Duluth officer advised that he had taken a stolen vehicle report from the 51-year-old owner earlier in the day but he was having trouble finding the owner to confirm if he wanted the vehicle entered as stolen. The man walking away eventually stopped and spoke to officers. The 28-year-old said that the keys to the vehicle were locked inside. Officer Battaglia was able to make contact with the owner of the vehicle, who said he was not interested in reporting the vehicle as stolen and only wanted to get it back.

### Theft

On 03/06/22, a 42-year-old male reported the theft of his 2007 Chevy Suburban. He stated he posted it on Facebook Marketplace to sell it and was contacted on 03/01/22 by a man who was interested in looking at it for his son. On 03/05/22, the alleged son texted the reporting party and made an agreement to come look at the vehicle on 03/06/22 at the Econo Lodge, where the reporting party was staying. When the man arrived to look at the vehicle, the reporting party's fiancé went to meet him. She stated she gave the man the vehicle's keys and asked him not to leave the motel property, as the vehicle was low on gas and the temporary permit on the back was expired. She said the man got into the vehicle, drove it around the back of the motel, and never came back. The vehicle was entered as stolen in the national database.

On the morning of 03/07/22, Officer Williams was advised that a property owner on Thunderchief Lane arrived at his shop that morning and discovered snow on the ground surrounding a one ton truck had been disturbed. After closer inspection, he observed that the catalytic converter had been cut off. He believes this occurred over the weekend. Later that day, the reporting party discovered that the catalytic converter had been cut off another truck on the property, as well.