



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 06/12/22 to 06/18/22, the Hermantown PD had 210 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

Disturbance

On 06/16/22 at approximately 2:15 p.m., officers were advised that a caller was reporting that neighbors were outside pushing and hitting each other. Officers arrived on scene and spoke separately to the parties involved. The 20-year-old man stated he lived at the residence with his mom and girlfriend. He said that he and his girlfriend broke up and he was trying to move her out. When asked about the physical confrontation, he said he had to restrain her arms because she had been punching him. The man's 34-year-old girlfriend initially said the argument was verbal only. She said that the man began throwing her belongings outside and described a "tug of war" between them. She had a visible scrape on her chin that she said she sustained when she grabbed a baby swing from the man. She said she eventually tried to close the door of the residence while the man was attempting to shove it open. She said the man never struck her and explained that she had been shoving him while trying to get her belongings from him. She admitted to kicking the door to the residence. Officers also spoke with witnesses to the incident and determined that although both parties appeared to have been involved in the domestic disturbance, a predominant aggressor was not clearly established. Both parties were cited for disorderly conduct, as the incident prompted neighbors to call 911 to stop the screaming, pushing, and kicking.

Damage to Property

On the morning of 06/15/22, a 46-year-old Proctor resident reported that two of his tires had been slashed while he was at Walmart between 7 and 8:30 p.m. on 06/12/22. Officer Stracek observed a cut in the sidewall of one of the tires that is consistent with someone purposely damaging the tire; the cost to replace the tires was \$583.78. The man stated he didn't know who would have done this, but noted that he has a lot of political stickers on his vehicle. Officer Stracek contacted Walmart loss prevention and was able to review video during the time frame that the victim was at the store. The video shows a red SUV pull up and park next to the victim's vehicle. The driver of the red SUV could be seen on video tampering with the tires on the victim's vehicle before getting back into his SUV and driving around the lot, later parking in a different area. Officer Stracek noted that this appeared to be planned out and targeted. Officer Stracek had recent contact with the suspect vehicle and was able to identify the 37-year-old suspect. Officer Stracek determined that the victim and suspect live near each other, but the victim denied knowing the suspect or having issues with any neighbors. Officer Stracek was unable to make contact with the suspect. Reports have been forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for charges of damage to property.

Order Violation

At 8:30 p.m. on 06/12/22, officers were advised of a possible order violation at a Haines Road address. The reporting party stated that her 88-year-old man had a harassment order against a 37-year-old man; she said she did not see the man but his vehicle was on the property. The caller also stated that the younger man's sister lives in a mobile home on the property. Officers reviewed the order, which prohibited the younger man from being within 300 feet of the older man's house.



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Officers arrived as the man's sister was backing a vehicle out of a parking spot in the driveway. The 31-year-old woman began questioning the reason for the contact. When advised that the man can't be within 300 feet of the other house on the property, the woman argued that a court order states that the man needs to visit his child at her house. Officer Gottschald located the man in the backseat of the woman's vehicle and observed a small baggie of marijuana in his hand as he stepped out of the vehicle. The man said she was aware of the order but didn't believe he was in violation. When officers placed the man into custody, the woman began to scream at them and demanded that a deputy respond for a second opinion. The woman was advised that there would be no "cop shopping" and the man was transported from the scene. The man said he was served with the order 2-3 days prior and he explained to the deputy that he was ordered to visit his daughter at his sister's house. He claimed that the deputy told him that visiting his daughter at his sister's would "probably be fine." He further stated that the day before, he was locking the door to his apartment when he saw the elderly male who has the order against him. He said the man was attempting to make conversation with him and he thought they were past their prior issues. The man admitted to arriving at his sister's house at approximately 7:15 that evening. Officers used the Google Maps distance calculator to estimate the distance between the houses as 161.72 feet at their farthest corners.

Check Welfare

On 06/18/22 at 7:35 p.m., a caller known to have mental health issues reported that there were multiple people in cars cutting down power lines. The man requested that law enforcement pull the occupants out of their vehicles and break their backs. Due to other calls, officers were unable to respond to the man's residence. Approximately an hour later, officers were advised to check the welfare of the same man, who was now reported to be throwing rocks at cars and yelling. Another caller stated the man was almost involved in a fight with another customer. Officers located the 45-year-old, who was rambling about a man with hair that was too long and said the man was not allowed in Hermantown because of his hair length. Outside the store, the man fixated on everyone around him, accusing everyone of being controlled by Adolf Hitler and were out to harm him. During transport, the man was talking about people breaking glass in stores and said the AT&T store had a broken window that the officers did not see. After arriving at a local hospital for an evaluation, the man became fixated on a female security guard walking in front of him and he attempted to deliver a leg sweep or kick to the thigh of the guard. Officer Leibel controlled the man and advised him that he would not be kicking security guards. The man apologized and was left at the hospital without further incident.

Suspicious Activity

At approximately 2:15 a.m. on 06/13/22, Officer Gottschald was dispatched to the report of suspicious activity at an address in the 5400 block of Hermantown Road. The reporting party stated that a vehicle had parked on the road and she could see flashlights on the property across the street. The vehicle left before officers arrived but was described as a gold SUB pulling a trailer with a light out. The resident at the address was contacted and said he didn't see or anything. He did not immediately notice anything missing.



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The crimefighting continues...

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Driving Under the Influence

Just before noon on 06/12/22, a caller reported a possibly intoxicated driver heading eastbound near Sam's Club. The woman reported that the vehicle had been swerving all over the road, crossing both the centerline and white line, and went up onto the median, and said the driving conduct had been going on for about four miles. She then stated that she was pulling into the Best Buy parking lot behind the vehicle. Officer Stracek arrived on scene and observed the suspect vehicle parked in two spots unoccupied. The reporting party described watching the driver stumble into Best Buy and said there was only one person inside the vehicle. While attempting to locate the driver in Best Buy, Officer Stracek observed the suspect getting back into her vehicle. He made contact with the woman, who said she was just waiting, that she hadn't been driving, and that she doesn't have a valid driver's license. When asked where she had been coming from, the woman started saying "I'm headed from..." but corrected herself to say "we." After observing the woman display signs of impairment, Officer Stracek asked the woman if she uses prescription medications and she admitted to using a controlled substance medication. After admitting to driving, the woman acknowledged she swerved while driving. She said she doesn't use illegal drugs and had been clean for nearly 10 years. The woman was adamant that her husband was with her and is still in the area. She also stated she did not believe her medications impacted the way she could safely operate a motor vehicle. The woman performed poorly on field sobriety testing and was ultimately transported to a local hospital for a blood test. Charges are pending results of the test.

On 06/15/22, just after 2:30 p.m., a 57-year-old man reported that he had been rear-ended by a Subaru Legacy as he was slowing for a stop sign at Lavaque and Maple Grove Road. He pulled onto the shoulder to exchange information with the other driver, but the Subaru drove around him and left the scene. He followed the Subaru and advised that it pulled into a driveway on Lavaque Road. Officer Stracek made contact with the Subaru's female driver and detected an overwhelming odor of alcoholic beverage emitting from the vehicle. The 38-year-old woman said that the other driver had been "going way too fast and I couldn't slow down quick enough." She told Officer Stracek that she was coming from Sturgeon Lake, but said she was new to the area and didn't know where the accident happened. Officer Stracek told her that he had been to her house in December so he knew she had been around a while. She had a hard time trying to walk Officer Stracek through the accident and said she hit the other vehicle because he abruptly stopped. She said she was trying to get home, but was going south on Lavaque when she needed to be heading north. The woman admitted to consuming one drink earlier in the day. Family members responded to pick up the 2- and 5-year-old children that were in the woman's vehicle. After performing field sobriety testing and a preliminary breath test with a result of .243% blood alcohol content, the woman said she thought she was borderline when asked if she thought she was over the legal limit. She also stated she believed she was okay to safely operate a motor vehicle. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for charges of 2nd degree DWI, .08 or more, child endangerment, and hit and run.

During a Toward Zero Death special traffic enforcement shift on 06/17/22 at 1 a.m., Officer Stracek conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle that was traveling 51 mph in a 30 mph zone. As he activated his emergency lights, the vehicle's brakes turned on immediately before the vehicle drifted into the passing lane and accelerated. Officer Stracek activated his squad's siren and observed the vehicle drift from the passing lane into the driving lane then onto the shoulder, where it hopped a curb. The left side of the vehicle hit the curb, making the vehicle bounce back onto the roadway, inches away from striking a power pole. The vehicle then slowed into



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the middle of the roadway and eventually pulled over in the driving lane, running into a metal barrier on the right side of the road. The 29-year-old driver said he was sorry and explained that he was texting while driving. He admitting to drinking at a strip club after his girlfriend kicked him out for the night. After poorly performing field sobriety testing, the man said he had one prior DWI in Superior about a month prior. When asked if he thought he was over the legal limit, the man responded, "I hope not." His preliminary breath test resulted in a reading of .228% blood alcohol content and he was placed under arrest. He was lodged for 2nd degree DWI, .08 or more, speed, and failure to drive in a single lane.

On 06/17/22 at approximately 10:15 p.m., Officer Stracek was working a Toward Zero Death special traffic enforcement shift when he observed a Chevy SUV in front of him drift into the turning lane before correcting itself. The vehicle then almost entered the center grass median on Miller Trunk Highway. The vehicle was displaying March 2022 tabs on the license plate. Officer Stracek conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle and made contact with the 35-year-old driver. The man said he was heading from Fredenberg to pick his wife up at work in Duluth. The man was slurring his speech and had a hard time forming his responses. Officer Stracek noted an overwhelming odor of alcoholic beverage emitting from his breath. The man stated he was not willing to perform field sobriety testing. When offered a preliminary breath test, the man did not want to provide a breath sample. The man asked several times if he could park his vehicle and walk to his nearby residence with his children, who were passengers in his vehicle. After the man was placed under arrest for DWI, he offered to provide a breath sample, which resulted in a reading of .239% blood alcohol content. Officers contacted the man's wife to arrange for the four teenagers, ages 12-16, to get home. While waiting in the sally port of the St. Louis County Jail, the man advised Officer Stracek that he needed to use the bathroom. Officer Stracek explained that there weren't any facilities available to use at the moment but once they were inside, the man could use the bathroom. A short time later, the man urinated in the rear of the squad car. The man was lodged for charges of 2nd degree DWI, .08 or more, child endangerment, and failure to drive in a single lane.

Just before 1:30 a.m. on 06/18/22, Officer Stracek was working a Toward Zero Death special traffic enforcement shift when he heard a vehicle with loud exhaust that sounded like it was rapidly accelerating. Radar locked the speed of the vehicle at 58 mph in a 30 mph zone. The vehicle slowed briefly when Officer Stracek pulled out, but then accelerated, drifting in and out of its lane. Officer Stracek and Deputy Sobczak turned on their squads' sirens behind the vehicle and the driver hit their brakes and turned on a blinker. The vehicle almost came to a stop and then started to accelerate again. Deputy Sobczak then went in front of the vehicle, forcing it to turn into a parking lot, where the vehicle tried to turn back out onto the road and was ultimately boxed in. The 27-year-old driver was identified and claimed he stopped as soon as he saw officers. Officer Stracek detected a strong odor of alcoholic beverage on the man's breath, along with glossy eyes and slurred speech. After hesitating, the man admitted to drinking in Superior, explaining that a guy in the bar upset him and they were going to fight. When asked for his driver's license, the man said "I know what this leads to," expanding on his statement with, "another DWI." The man was advised to step out of his vehicle multiple times before reaching behind him in the seat near the small of his back as if he was attempting to retrieve something near his waistband. He was told not to reach for anything, but he pulled a dark object out; officers immediately entered the driver's area of the vehicle and trapped his hand by pushing it into the seat. It was discovered that the man had pulled out an open brown bottle with beer in it. The man had to be escorted out of his vehicle and initially refused to provide his name. While officers were turning off their emergency lights, the man attempted to get back in his vehicle. Due to his uncooperative behavior, field sobriety testing was not offered. The man refused to provide a preliminary breath test sample. The man provided a urine sample, although he did not follow directions that were explained multiple times. Charges are pending results of the urine test.