



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 06/19/22 to 06/25/22, the Hermantown PD had 203 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

On the afternoon of 06/24/22, a 31-year-old man reported that he had been assaulted in the early morning at a local bar. He told Officer Gottschald that he had gone to a local hospital after the assault and he was currently waiting to see a specialist for a possible shoulder dislocation. When Officer Gottschald met with the man, she noted that he had large bruises on his cheeks, his nose and left eye were swollen and bruised, his lip was bruised and swollen, and there was a large bruise on the side of his head. The man was unable to lift his left arm due to the substantial pain in his shoulder. He said that another male at the bar was making racial slurs to a black female and he asked the man to stop making inappropriate comments, suggesting it may be best for the man to leave for the night. He said he followed the other man out, and reached to shake his hand when the man punched him in the face. Officer Gottschald was able to review video of the incident. After the suspect punched the reporting party, the victim was thrown to the ground and punched approximately 11 times and he appeared to briefly lose consciousness. The suspect and a female then got into a vehicle and left. The victim stated his friends were familiar with the suspect and were able to tell him the man's name, which he then confirmed through Facebook photos. Officer Gottschald attempted to contact the suspect without success. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of 3rd degree assault.

Driving Under the Influence

At approximately 1:30 a.m. on 06/24/22, Officer Stracek was working a Toward Zero Death special traffic enforcement shift when he observed a vehicle travel through a red light without making any attempt to stop. He conducted a traffic stop on the vehicle and made contact with the 38-year-old driver, who admitted to "rolling through" the light because it was a "clear night." Officer Stracek observed that the driver had glossy eyes and a mild odor of alcoholic beverage coming from his breath. He said he was headed home from a Superior bar, where he had one beer and one shot. The man performed field sobriety testing and submitted to a preliminary breath test, which resulted in a reading of .127% blood alcohol content. The man was searched incident to arrest and a loaded handgun was located on his front waistband. The man has a valid permit to carry. His handgun was taken for safekeeping. The man was cited for 4th degree DWI, .08 or more, and running a red light.

On 06/26/22 at 10:15 p.m., Sgt. Pernu was dispatched to check the welfare of a driver on Lavaque Road after two callers reported that a truck was parked in the middle of the northbound lane of Lavaque Road. Sgt. Pernu located the truck, which was driving from the area, and turned to catch up. He noted the vehicle was weaving in the driving lane on southbound Miller Trunk Highway. He was pacing the truck at 35 mph in a 55 mph zone. After performing a traffic stop on the vehicle, he spoke to the 28-year-old male driver. During the conversation, the man was muttering and slurring words so much that Sgt. Pernu couldn't understand and had to ask him multiple times to clarify his answers. The man said he was just trying to get home and admitted to having three drinks. His eyes were bloodshot and watery and a strong odor of alcoholic beverage was coming from him. The man performed field sobriety testing poorly and refused to submit to a preliminary breath test. He was placed under arrest and while inventorying the vehicle before towing it, officers located a 6-pack of beer that contained three empty bottles. The man declined to take a breath test, saying that he didn't feel like he should have been tested. Sgt. Pernu later spoke to one of the reporting parties, who said that the vehicle was parked in the driving lane on Lavaque Road near Green Acres Road. He approached the truck and noted that the driver's door was slightly ajar and the driver appeared to be sleeping with a strong odor of alcohol coming from the truck. He stated that when another vehicle stopped to assist, the driver of the truck woke up



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and got out. The other citizen was attempting to talk to the driver, who pushed the citizen away, got in the truck, and drove off. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of 3rd degree test refusal, 4th degree DWI, and open container.

Theft

Just before 8 p.m. on 06/24/22, Gordy's Gift and Garden Center reported a theft of flowers. The reporting party stated that they closed at 7 p.m. and staff was getting ready to leave. A female passenger exited a vehicle and entered a greenhouse through a closed door. The greenhouse is not a public area and a sign clearly states this. The reporting party said that the female made two trips to the vehicle with her hands full of hanging flower baskets and trays of flowers. Once staff began to exit the rear of the building, the vehicle took off. Officer Stracek reviewed surveillance footage of the theft. He noted the vehicle was occupied by an older female driver, a younger female passenger, a toddler, and a dog. He was able to observe a partial plate on the vehicle and discovered a matching vehicle registered to a 60-year-old Duluth woman. Using police records, Officer Stracek noted that the woman had multiple theft convictions and that her 23-year-old daughter has been convicted of theft and was currently on probation for burglary. Using DVS photos, he was able to confirm that the pair were the suspects in the incident. At 5 a.m. on 06/26/22, Officer Stracek drove to the older woman's residence and observed multiple hanging baskets. He later showed the reporting party photos of the baskets and she confirmed that they were the stolen ones. That evening, he spoke to the older woman on the phone. She initially stated she couldn't remember what she was doing on the day of the theft, and stated that her daughter had her vehicle that day. During the conversation, the woman claimed she had nothing to hide and wasn't lying. When Officer Stracek explained that he could prove it was her in the video, the woman would only respond, "I understand." She then stated she told her daughter not to do it and said it was stupid and she couldn't believe it happened. She ultimately hung up on Officer Stracek. He was unable to get ahold of the younger woman. Reports have been sent to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of burglary against the younger woman and possession of stolen property against the older woman. The value of the three hanging baskets and 32 trays of flowers is \$337.53.

Drugs

On 06/21/22 at 1:14 a.m., Officer Stracek was on patrol when he observed a minivan with a red 2021 tab on the front license plate. He conducted a query of the plate and discovered the tabs expired in February 2021. After performing a traffic stop on the vehicle, Officer Stracek made contact with the 32-year-old female driver, who he noted had been cited for several traffic offenses in May 2022, and her male passenger. Due to Officer Stracek's squad computer losing connection, he told the woman she would not be cited for her traffic offenses; he also advised her and her passenger to contact someone to pick them and the vehicle up, as neither had a valid license. Due to suspicious activity by the vehicle's occupants and admitted drug use by the driver, Officer Stracek asked the driver for permission to search her vehicle. She agreed and officers located a used needle and jar of marijuana in her purse. During Officer Stracek's contacts with the pair, he had noted that a pack of cigarettes from the man's lap was no longer there the next time he approached the vehicle and a drawstring bag had been moved three times. During the vehicle search, the cigarette pack with multiple packages of illegal substances inside it was located in the drawstring bag. After placing the man in custody, officers located a large wad of cash, later determined to be \$4201, in his pocket. The man claimed to have sold a car, explaining that was where he got the cash, which was ultimately seized. The suspected meth weighed 9.9 grams and four individual baggies of suspected heroin/fentanyl weighed 1.6 grams. The 26-year-old man was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for 4th degree sales and possession of drug paraphernalia.