



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

# AROUND TOWN

During the week of 07/17/22 to 07/23/22, the Hermantown PD had 175 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  
Tim Battaglia  
Jon Enright  
Erika Johnson - SRO  
Olivia Gottschald  
Jonathan Stracek  
Andrew Leibel  
Alex Prouse  
Brandon Solem

## K-9 Officers

Tuuko  
Jack

## Records

Jessica Sorensen  
Dana Ross  
Samantha Knapp

### Disturbance

At 9:16 a.m. on 07/19/22, Officers Johnson and Leibel responded to a Haines Road gas station after an employee reported that a male was whipping full jugs of washer fluid at the windows of the store. The man then walked toward Miller Trunk Highway and he was located in the empty lot between the Econo Lodge and Haines Road. Officer Leibel recognized the 42-year-old man, who stated he became angry because the employees were accusing him of stealing and he said he was not a thief. Officer Johnson responded to the gas station, where employees showed her the windows and entrance doors that were smeared with remnants of cigarette butts. They also showed her a pile of cigarette butts that the man had dumped onto the ground to sift through. They stated the man came into the store and got some water, then went and laid in the parking lot. The man then began to push a shopping cart out of the lot and was told he couldn't take it, which angered him. He started throwing things and employees locked the store because they were afraid of the man's temper. After the doors were locked, the man picked up jugs of washer fluid and threw them at the window. Based on the statements of employees that they were afraid enough to lock the doors and the evidence of the man vandalizing the storefront, he was cited for disorderly conduct.

### Driving Under the Influence

At 11:53 p.m. on 07/22/22, Officer Stracek observed a black Chevy Silverado traveling south on Stebner Road that was displaying 2021 tabs. He turned around and activated his emergency lights. The truck traveled over a quarter of a mile before turning onto Lightning Drive and stopping. The 25-year-old male driver told Officer Stracek that he noticed there wasn't a shoulder on Stebner Road and he wanted to get off on a side road. Officer Stracek told him that he needs to pull over right away if there are emergency lights, explaining that there could be an emergency down the road he could be slowing emergency vehicles down. The man admitted to knowing that his tabs had expired in October 2021, stating the tabs are expensive and he planned on buying them next week. The man was headed home from Skyline, where had "two beers." He later stated he shared a pitcher of beer with his fiancé. The man performed field sobriety testing and submitted to a preliminary breath test that resulted in a reading of .103% blood alcohol content. The man's fiancé was offered a preliminary breath test that resulted in .012% BAC and she was allowed to drive the vehicle home. The man was ultimately cited for 4<sup>th</sup> degree DWI, .08 or more, and expired tabs.

### Assault

On 07/17/22, shortly before 8 p.m., officers were dispatched to a domestic incident in the 4800 block of Miller Trunk Highway. Upon arriving, the involved family explained what happened. A teenaged female said that she and her brother got into an argument and their father intervened. As he walked away, she swore at him and she said that he then grabbed her head with both hands and started pulling on her hair. The girl's mother said she then got between them. After sitting with her daughter, she went into the living room and confronted the 50-year-old man. She said that while she was yelling at him, he reached out with one hand and grabbed her by the throat, squeezing for a



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couple seconds. Another teenager in the house then said that he went over and tackled his dad off of his mom; his dad then put him in a headlock and he punched the man to get free. The 45-year-old woman eventually confronted the man again. She said she got in his face and slapped him, then he put his hands around her throat again. When officers spoke to the man, his recollection of the incident was similar to that of what his family said happened. He added that he is the only income-earner in the household and he's tired of being disrespected. Officers detected an odor of alcohol emanating from the man and he admitted to drinking six cans of beer throughout the day. The man was on no-drink probation and he provided a preliminary breath test that resulted in a reading of .082. The man was ultimately lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for two counts of felony domestic assault, which was enhanced from four prior domestic violence related convictions in the last ten years.

### Miscellaneous

Officer Stracek was on patrol just after 3:30 a.m. on 07/23/22 when he observed a vehicle in the eastbound lane of Morris Thomas Road stopped in the driving lane approximately 20 yards before the intersection with Lavaque Road. As Officer Stracek approached the intersection, the vehicle accelerated toward the stop sign and didn't stop. He performed a traffic stop on the vehicle, which was registered in Fargo, North Dakota. As he approached the vehicle, he observed a metal straw with brown residue on the driver's lap that she appeared to be trying to hide. She initially would not give Officer Stracek the straw, but eventually handed it to him. She stated she and her passengers were in town for a funeral. The woman verbally provided her name and paused when asked her date of birth. She then told him it was 02/22/2000. When asked how old she was, she stated 21, then corrected herself and stated that she was 22. When confronted, the woman was adamant that she did not give a false name. Both passengers denied knowing her real name. Officer Stracek had her write her full name and date of birth on his notepad. She provided the same name, but this time gave a birthdate of 02/22/1999. When checking the name, Officer Stracek noted that it came back with a warrant hit with a different last name. She told him that she uses both last names because they belonged to different parents. One of the passengers told Officer Gottschald the woman's real name. When confronted, the woman said that was her sister. She then admitted to her real name. She was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for a felony possession warrant out of Clay County. Her passengers, a 28-year-old male and 19-year-old female, were transported to a local hotel. A trace amount of methamphetamine was located in the vehicle and was placed into evidence for destruction at the Hermantown Police Department. Reports have been forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of gross misdemeanor providing a false name of another person.

### Theft

On 07/18/22 at approximately 4 p.m., Walmart reported three females working together to conceal items, including laundry products and other household items, into a trash can. Sgt. Pernu arrived on scene and met with Loss Prevention staff and the three suspects. The three females stated they were all in college and short on money. One of the suspects told Sgt. Pernu that they had seen Tik Tok videos of shoplifting and found it a way to save money on everyday items. She stated this wasn't the first time she shoplifted. Another suspect added that she would not have



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had enough money to pay for the items. The trio admitted to working in unison to conceal items into the trash bin before paying for the trash bin and attempting to walk out with the unpaid merchandise. All three females, 19-21, were cited for shoplifting.

Just before 5 p.m. on 07/21/22, a 66-year-old man reported that a work ipad and laptop were taken from his vehicle at the Holiday station at the intersection of Arrowhead and Miller Trunk Highway. The man said he parked next to a silver Chevy Cruze and ran inside. He noted a female in a black sundress get into the car as he exited the store and the vehicle left in a hurry. When he got into his truck, he noted that the items had been taken. He then began following the vehicle and its two occupants north toward the Kwik Trip on Sugar Maple Drive. There, he began using an app to track his stolen ipad. The location came up in the area that the Cruze was parked, then began tracking with the movement of the vehicle as it left the lot and travelled south on Miller Trunk Highway. The man lost sight of the vehicle but the app put the ipad's location near Skyline Lanes. It was later located on a dumpster near the building. The man's coworker began searching the area for the suspect vehicle and located it in the mall parking lot, where he watched the female and male actively prowling two trucks. He stated that both of them carried a floor jack from one of the vehicles and loaded it into the trunk of the Cruze. The vehicle then left the mall and headed north on Miller Trunk Highway and the coworker followed. He told officers that in front of Kohl's, the suspect vehicle stopped in the road and the male driver approached his vehicle, yelling and screaming. The suspect then pounded his fists on the driver's window and grabbed the door handle, busting it off, before returning to the Cruze and leaving the scene. Both the victim and his coworker described the same two occupants of the vehicle. Officer Williams located and stopped the vehicle in the Energy Plus parking lot. The woman attempted to cover up the laptop bag in the backseat of the Cruze. The 52-year-old male driver attempted to place all the blame on his 34-year-old wife, stating she has mental health issues and he does everything to make her happy. He told officers that he went into the Holiday gas station and she stated outside. He claimed to have no knowledge of stolen electronics. He said that when they stopped in the Skyline Lanes lot to smoke, his wife handed him an ipad and asked him to put it in the dumpster but that he didn't ask where it came from. The man then said they drove to the mall. He was initially silent when confronted with the theft of the floor jack from a truck there, but eventually agreed that they had stolen it. He admitted that he saw the vehicle follow him from the mall and he stopped and confronted the driver. The woman admitted to taking the laptop bag, but claimed she found it laying in the parking lot at the Holiday station. She admitted that they left the ipad in the dumpster because she thought they were being followed. She denied that either of them were involved in a vehicle prowl or theft at the mall, but later said her husband opened the trunk of their car but she did not see what he placed inside. Officers located the stolen laptop and jack in the vehicle, along with a number of power tools that appeared to be in new condition; some were in new sealed boxes. These items included two drills, lithium battery, battery charger, booster pack, a sawzall, and a grinder. The woman was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for two counts of felony computer theft and one count of motor vehicle tampering. Charges against her husband are pending further investigation and receipt of the video from the Holiday station. The Duluth Police Department is investigating the vehicle prowl and theft that occurred at the mall.