



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

# AROUND TOWN

During the week of 07/24/22 to 07/30/22, 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  
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

### Assault

On the afternoon of 07/28/22, officers responded to Walmart after receiving the report of an assault. A 35-year-old woman told Officer Johnson that her 17-year-old daughter reached inside the backseat of a vehicle that drove by. The occupants, including the 19-year-old "baby mama" of the teenager's ex-boyfriend, got out and went toward the teenager, grabbing her by the neck and assaulting her. The woman said that while she attempted to separate the parties, she was punched in both sides of her head, her face, and in the arm. She said she was trying to protect her daughter from getting hit. Officer Johnson reviewed video of the incident. The vehicle, driven by the 19-year-old woman's 44-year-old mother, stopped as the reporting party's daughter approached to talk or yell at the occupants. She can be seen reaching inside the vehicle and pulling her arms back out, continuing to speak the occupants as the vehicle drives away. Another camera showed the 19-year-old exit the vehicle and walk toward the younger girl, as the reporting party attempts to keep them separate. At this time, the 44-year-old woman began pushing and pulling the reporting party's sweatshirt as an unknown female went after the 17-year-old. The 35-year-old attempted to step in front of her daughter and back her into a wall to protect her. The mother appeared to be punched from both sides by the unknown female and the 19-year-old. The 17-year-old refused to get involved in pursuing charges, but her mother was interested in moving forward. This incident is under investigation.

At approximately 1:30 a.m. on 07/30/22, officers responded to an RV park on Miller Trunk Highway after dispatch received a text referencing an assault that had occurred. The texter refused to confirm her address and also wrote that she didn't want him to go to jail. She refused to exit the RV for quite some time, stating that her man was sleeping on the couch near the door with a knife. The 32-year-old woman finally exited the RV just after 3 a.m. She told officers that she and her boyfriend had been out drinking and got into an argument. She said he sprayed her in the face with cleaning spray after seeing some dog feces on the floor. She also showed officers fresh injuries to her arm that appeared to be puncture wounds, and she said her 50-year-old boyfriend stabbed her with a car key. She also said that he threatened to stab her with a steak knife. Although the woman was reluctant to have to share living and sleeping space with someone, she ultimately agreed to go to Safehaven and she was transported there at approximately 4:35 a.m. The woman called HPD at approximately 5:40 a.m., stating that she wanted to drop all the charges and that she was lying about everything. A short time later, the woman called again, stating she left the shelter and wanted to drop the charges. Shortly after 3:30 p.m., officers approached the RV and attempted to make contact with the man. After knocking and announcing several times, the woman opened the door and walked out. She said the man was not there and would not allow officers to check inside. She immediately appeared irritated with officers and told them to leave, again claiming that everything she reported was a lie. A short time later, Sgt. Pfeiffer answered a phone call at the PD from a number that came up on caller ID with the man's name. The male on the line gave a different name and began questioning why officers were outside his RV. When confronted about his name, the man downplayed the charges as said the marks on the woman's arms were mosquito bites. When asked to meet officers at the police department, the man began screaming and calling Sgt. Pfeiffer a racist before the conversation was disconnected. Reports will be forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office.

### Driving Under the Influence

Just before 1 a.m. on 07/24/22, Officer Stracek observed a vehicle drifting onto the centerline and back toward the fog line multiple times. As he paced the vehicle, he noted that it was varying in speed from 50 to 70 mph in



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a posted 60 mph zone. He activated his emergency lights to initiate a traffic stop and the driver didn't notice him for over 10 seconds. When he pulled over, he made contact with the 74-year-old woman, who stated she was on her way home from the Powerhouse Bar. The woman admitted to having two tall drinks, but when asked if she felt the effects of the alcoholic beverages, she responded that it was her night to go out on the town. Due to her age, impairment, and medical conditions, Officer Stracek did not have the woman perform several of the field sobriety tests. She was only able to provide weak samples into the preliminary breath test, but Officer Stracek got a manual reading of .12% blood alcohol content. The woman provided a urine sample and charges for driving under the influence at pending results of the test.

Officer Leibel was advised of a possible drunk driver leaving the Pike Lake Holiday Station just before 1:30 p.m. on 07/24/22. The caller reported that the truck began heading southbound on Miller Trunk Highway. Officer Leibel observed the truck pass his location and noted that the male driver appeared to be trying to light a cigarette. The truck was in the left lane approaching a left lane closure for construction; the truck then merged from the left lane to the right without signaling the maneuver. Officer Leibel continued to observe the vehicle weave within its lane and weave far enough to the left that he nearly collided with an orange construction barrel in the work zone. Officer Leibel performed a traffic stop on the truck in a safe location just outside of the construction zone. After he made contact with the man, he noted that the man's movements were lethargic, his eyes were bloodshot and watery, and his speech was slurred. The man admitted to having "a couple" drinks. The 58-year-old man was having a hard time performing field sobriety testing, but ultimately agreed to a preliminary breath test, which showed a reading of .26% alcohol content. The man was cooperative during the DWI process. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of 3<sup>rd</sup> degree DWI, .08 or more, and improper change of course.

On 07/26/22 at approximately 9:30 p.m., a 43-year-old female reported that her vehicle had been hit in the Subway parking lot. When Officer Stracek arrived on scene, he observed the woman's vehicle pushed out of a parking spot by the other vehicle. The woman explained she was sitting in her vehicle eating and watching TV when the other vehicle hit her. She told Officer Stracek that the other driver sounded drunk. He then made contact with the other driver, a 34-year-old man, who stated he didn't see the parked vehicle and he was trying to leave the parking lot. Although the man was smoking a cigarette, Officer Stracek still detected a strong odor of alcoholic beverage coming from the man's breath. He also noted the man had glossy eyes and appeared to be unsteady on his feet. When asked for his driver's license, the man provided his phone number. He agreed to perform field sobriety testing, but declined to provide a preliminary breath sample, despite claiming to have had nothing to drink. He was transported to the Hermantown Police Department to be processed for DWI. He agreed to a breath test at that time and the result was more than twice the legal limit. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of 3<sup>rd</sup> degree DWI and .08 or more.

On 07/29/22 at 1:10 p.m., Sgt. Pernu was dispatched to the Speedway gas station after another reported that a Kia Sportage was swerving badly on the highway before pulling up to the gas station air pumps. A St. Louis County Deputy arrived first and requested medical response for two unresponsive people. He noted that the female driver was conscious but disoriented and he was unable to safely get the car into park. Sgt. Pernu checked on the driver, whose eyelids were droopy, as if she was having a hard time staying awake. He noted that her pupils were dilated to the point that there was very little color in her eyes. She was given one dose of Narcan and she became more responsive. The 67-year-old woman later admitted to snorting heroin around 5 a.m. The 50-year-old male passenger was given two doses of Narcan before he became responsive. He admitted to drinking heavily earlier in the day, as well as snorting heroin around a half hour before. He also stated that the driver had taken heroin with him a short time prior. Both parties were



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transported to a local hospital. A search warrant was executed to take the woman's blood, and charges are pending the results of that test.

At 11:53 p.m. on 07/30/22, Chief Crace was working a Toward Zero Death special traffic enforcement shift when he observed a speeding vehicle. He performed a traffic stop and spoke with the driver, who would only roll his window down approximately two inches. When asked to roll it down further, he declined and indicated he was in fear for his life, as he is afraid of law enforcement. As Chief Crace continued to speak with the driver, he could smell a strong odor of alcoholic beverage through the small gap in the window. He assured the man that he was safe and again requested that the window be rolled down further. The man rolled it down, but rolled it back up again shortly after. Since the driver continued to refuse to roll the window down, Chief Crace decided to forego field sobriety testing and asked the man to submit to a preliminary breath test, which he did, but spit into the straw while blowing. The test read .146% blood alcohol content and he asked the man to exit the vehicle. A second PBT resulted in a reading of .12% blood alcohol content. The man was cited for 4<sup>th</sup> degree DWI and .08 or more.

### Drugs:

On 07/26/22 at 11:35 p.m., Officer Stracek was on patrol in the area of Miller Trunk Highway and Midway Road when he observed a truck with a white light emitting from the rear. He then noticed the vehicle drift over the centerline and back into the driving lane. As he conducted a traffic stop, he noted that the white light he saw was a flashlight taped on to make a homemade license plate light. The 42-year-old male driver provided an ID card and Officer Stracek asked the three other occupants if anyone else had a valid driver's license. The two females gave him their IDs; the male in a rear passenger seat was avoiding eye contact and seemed to be trying to hide something on the floor. He verbally identified himself. When checking the 25-year-old female's information, Officer Stracek noted she had a male associate with an active felony warrant. He checked the booking photo on the associate and positively identified him as the male sitting in the backseat of the vehicle attempting to conceal his face. As the man was taken into custody for his warrant, Officer Stracek noted a hypodermic needle cap on his lap, as well as a blue rubber tie-off. On the floor near his feet was a black pop cap with white residue that later tested positive for fentanyl. Officer Stracek later located a loaded needle with what appeared to be heroin in the area the man was sitting. The 28-year-old man admitted that he had capped needles in his pants pocket. In the vehicle, Officer Stracek located a pack of cigarettes with a crystal-like rock that appeared to be methamphetamine and two homemade pipes. The driver admitted that the meth belonged to him. Charges are pending the results of testing on the drugs.

### Theft

On the morning of 07/30/22, Walmart reported two adults under-ringing merchandise in the self-checks. Loss Prevention said that the female was scanning some items but placing others directly bag into shopping bags without scanning them. He said that the male left the female alone and there wasn't enough evidence to stop him for being an accomplice. The 51-year-old woman was stopped and provided two receipts. She denied any wrong-doing and blamed Loss Prevention for harassing her. While Sgt. Pernu was attempting to speak with the woman, she continued to direct her attention to Loss Prevention staff, blaming him for harassing her as well as the door greeter for not checking her receipts close enough when she was leaving. When asked who the man with her was, she said he was a friend and she randomly ran into him in the store; video shows the pair arrive in the same vehicle. The woman then requested to pay for the unpaid items, but staff told her that would not be possible. The value of the merchandise she had not paid for was \$221.38. Sgt. Pernu reviewed video of the self-checkouts and observed that the woman spent approximately 17 minutes checking out. She was cited for theft.