



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

# AROUND TOWN

During the week of 05/23/21 to 05/29/21, 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

### Check Welfare

At approximately 8:30 p.m. on 11/17/22, officers were dispatched to check the welfare of a 59-year-old Hermantown resident. The woman's brother stated that she has medical issues and that she usually answers her phone but that he hadn't been able to get in touch with her that day. Officers responded to the woman's residence and found the front door unlocked. The woman was located slouched in her chair, alert but not knowing where she was or how long she had been there. The woman was transported to a local hospital.

### Parking Problem

On 11/17/22 at 12:35 p.m., Officer Salo was advised of a vehicle parked illegally in a handicapped spot at Walmart. He made contact with the driver, who has a placard but was not displaying it.

### Traffic

While patrolling the high school lot after school on 11/14/22, Officer Gottschald observed a Suburban doing donuts in the lot. She made contact with the 17-year-old driver, who stated he knew why she conducted a traffic stop. He was warned for the driving conduct but advised that he could be cited if it happens again.

### Accidents

At approximately 4:30 p.m. on 11/16/22, Officer Williams was dispatched to a hit and run accident in the Walmart parking lot. He met with the 71-year-old reporting party, who stated that she was driving her Toyota down the row and a Jeep pulling out of a parking spot backed up and hit her. The woman said that she got out of her vehicle and the driver of the Jeep rolled down the window. She asked if he heard her honking and the passenger told her that the driver was hard of hearing. She told the man to pull over so they could exchange information and report the accident. She said that she pulled into a parking space and the Jeep drove off. A witness provided the woman with the suspect vehicle's information and Officer Williams was able to contact the witness the following day by phone. The witness said she heard the Toyota's driver honking, then observed the Jeep backing up toward the Toyota. The woman provided a photo of the suspect vehicle and license plate. She said she took the photo because she felt something was off and she thought the driver was going to take off. Officer Williams was able to identify the driver of the vehicle. The 64-year-old man's last known phone number was disabled and Officer Williams was unable to make contact with the man at his last known address in Duluth. A citation for hit and run was mailed to the man. On 11/22/22, Officer Williams received a message from the suspect that said he was charged with hit and run and it was "bogus." The man admitted to being involved in an accident at Walmart, but claimed it was not a hit and run. He said that the other driver told him he was good to go. He denied that the damage to her vehicle was caused by his Jeep. Officer Williams advised the man that there was video of the incident showing the Jeep made contact with the Toyota right where the woman had reported the fresh damage. The man said he was going to fight the charge against him.



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### Miscellaneous

At 8 a.m. on 11/16/22, an employee of Northern Tool & Equipment reported that someone had dumped numerous bags of household garbage and appliances into their commercial dumpster overnight. Mail in the bags was addressed to a 60-year-old Hermantown resident. Detective Williams contacted the resident, who admitted to shopping at Northern Tool the previous day. She also admitted to throwing one box of stuff she had in her car into the dumpster. When asked if she has residential garbage services, the woman said that she burns her paper, recycles everything she can, and the dog eats the rest. She was advised that dumping garbage into private containers or onto public/private property is illegal and could result in a citation.

On 11/17/22, Detective Dwyer responded to Fleet Farm after they reported that they found a firearm in the warehouse women's bathroom, which is used only by employees and vendors. The Glock 43X handgun had been found on a toilet paper dispenser. After Detective Dwyer left work for the day, a 42-year-old woman texted him and stated that she had been informed that her handgun had been found and HPD now had the gun. She said that she had been carrying before work and when she was getting ready in the bathroom, she became distracted when someone began talking to her on her work radio and she left the gun behind. The woman was advised that HPD policy would require her to get a permit to purchase so the gun could be returned to her.

### Theft

On 11/13/22, just after 7:30 p.m., Officer Stracek observed a male leaving Walmart on a bicycle that was not displaying front or back lights as required by law. He made contact with the man, who identified himself only by the first name of "Jason." Officer Stracek recognized the man and told him not to make another bad decision and provide a false name; the man confirmed his real name and was taken into custody for active warrants. Prior to lodging the man at the St. Louis County Jail, Officer Stracek located numerous receipts in his wallet and multiple debit and credit cards that didn't belong to him. The man claimed he found the items that weren't his discarded on the streets of Duluth. Multiple hypodermic needles and tin foil were also located. Walmart Loss Prevention reviewed surveillance video with Officer Stracek. The man selected items in the store before going to customer service, where he provided a receipt on his phone and received \$58.75 in cash for the fraudulent return. Loss Prevention staff explained that suspects scan barcodes on old paper receipts that they find, which creates a PDF of the receipt in their app. Officer Stracek determined that the man had been found guilty of a fraudulent return theft that occurred in December 2021; conditions of sentencing state that he should have no same or similar offenses and that he was not to trespass at Walmart. Reports have been forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for shoplifting and trespassing. In addition, charges of felony possession of burglary tools have been requested, as the man used his cell phone with intent to commit burglary or theft. Officer Stracek submitted the man's wallet into evidence at HPD. He went through the items inside and located three ID cards, five debit cards, two credit cards, one EBT card, and two Sam's Club membership cards with a variety of names on them, along with two hotel keys and nine store credit/gift cards. In addition, 35 receipts with different cards numbers or cash sales were located to 14 different stores.





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Just before 4 p.m. on 11/14/22, Walmart reported a shoplifting incident in which the male suspect got into the rear passenger seat of a Chevy Equinox, which then attempted to leave the parking lot. Officer Prouse located the vehicle and made contact with the 40-year-old suspect, who stated his card didn't go through and he was confronted by Loss Prevention. Officer Gottschald reviewed video of the incident. After selecting items throughout the store, the man proceeded to the self check registers, where he scanned items and placed them back into the shopping cart. He then used the pin pad and put a card into the chip reader, removing the card without completing the transaction. There was no receipt printed and the man exited the store. Loss Prevention stopped the man, who walked back into the store before turning around and walking out without the shopping cart before running through the lot to the Equinox. The total for the unpaid items was valued at \$269.86. He had selected hygiene products, food, tools and electronics. He was cited for the theft and trespassed. While officers were on scene for this incident, they were advised that the man suspect had also shoplifted from Walmart on 11/12/22 wearing the exact clothing he was wearing on 11/14/22. Video showed the man on 11/12/22 scanning \$736.45 worth of merchandise in the self-checkout area. The man then inserted a card into the machine for only a couple seconds and pulled it out before any payment could process. Officer Prouse asked the man about the incident on 11/12/22. The man said he got candy, an Oculus, a propane cylinder, Xbox battery pack and some clothing. He said he put his card in the machine, put in his PIN and then left. He agreed that he never saw a payment go through and he did not obtain a receipt. Officer Prouse advised the man that it looked like he was intentionally making it look like he was trying to pay for the items when he knew his card would not be accepted. The man said he could see how it looked like that, but he said he attempted to pay for the items. This report was forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of gross misdemeanor theft.

On 11/15/22, a 64-year-old man reported a burglary to his storage units, stating that management had contacted him after finding his locks cut off from his three storage units. He had originally made a burglary report on 10/10/22 and had then secured his three units with new locks. Following this theft, a safe was stolen from one of the units. It contained personal documents and papers and the man was notified by his credit union in Duluth of fraudulent activity. The Duluth Police Department identified a suspect in that case. On 11/15/22, he reported that an appliance dolly, two computer monitors, two snow shovels, six woodworking clamps, 10 pipe clamps, and a Washburn Apprentice Dreadnought acoustic guitar were taken. Officer Williams discovered that a Washburn Dreadnought guitar had been pawned on 10/24/22 and met with the reporting party to have him look at it. The man advised that it was not his guitar. This incident is under investigation.