



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 02/19/23 to 02/25/23, the Hermantown PD had 177 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

Damage to Property

On 02/25/23 at 4:10 p.m., a 45-year-old woman reported that she discovered items in her storage unit had been damaged. She said that she had put the items in the unit last September and had not checked on them until now. She stated that a couch, table, and sign were damaged and she suspected her 32-year-old ex-boyfriend had done it. She explained that that he was her boyfriend until an hour and half prior and that their relationship has been a pattern of abuse, accusing him of using full moon magic, new moon magic, and blood magic to attack her. She also said he uses voodoo dolls against her and she believed he killed her dog. She told Officer Salo that the storage unit door was double locked and the locks were not cut when she arrived that day, but stated that her ex-boyfriend has lock-picking skills. Officer Salo noted that the unit was completely filled to the top with piled up, packed items. The woman was advised to make a list of the value of damages.

Trespass

On 02/19/23 at approximately 10 p.m., Officer Stracek conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle leaving the Walmart parking lot. During the contact, Officer Stracek recognized the 27-year-old male passenger and confirmed that he had been trespassed from Walmart in June 2022. The man admitted he went inside the store and to the bathroom, but stated he thought the trespass was over now that he had settled the court cases. He was issued a citation for trespass.

Driving Under the Influence

At approximately 1:15 a.m. on 02/01/23, Officer Stracek was on patrol when he observed a Honda Pilot backing out of a driveway in the 3500 block of Haines Road. As he came back up the road minutes later, he noted that the same vehicle was now stuck in the bottom of the driveway and had struck a garbage can. Officer Stracek activated his emergency lights and stepped out of his squad. A female got out of the Pilot's driver's seat and explained that the driveway was slippery and she couldn't get up. The 46-year-old woman said she was at the address to meet a friend, who later confirmed this. While speaking to the woman, Officer Stracek detected a strong odor of alcoholic beverage emitting from her breath. He observed that she was stumbling and had glossy eyes. He told the woman he wanted to make sure she was okay to be driving and she asked if she could just leave her vehicle parked. The woman was confrontational and wasn't following Officer Stracek's requests as she attempted to control the situation. She agreed to perform the eye test but was not willing to perform any other tests, and asked why Officer Stracek was doing "this" to her. The woman admitted to consuming multiple beers but did not believe it was enough to impair her ability to drive. When she was placed under arrest, the woman physically resisted being handcuffed and was directed to the ground. While being processed at the Hermantown Police Department, the woman refused to answer yes or no questions, instead stating "I hear what you read to me." She eventually made contact with an attorney and agreed to submit to a breath test. The machine accepted her first breath sample, but would not clear the sample and filter, making it impossible for her to provide a second sample. A search warrant was instead granted for a urine sample and charges of driving under the influence and obstruction are pending the results of the test.



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On 02/21/23 at 9:19 p.m., Officer Stracek was on patrol when he observed a vehicle leaving the Walmart parking lot. The truck did not have a front license plate and the rear plate had a clear protective covering that had impacted the license plate's reflectiveness. He performed a traffic stop and made contact with the 41-year-old driver. The man, who is from out of town, seemed agitated and was throwing himself around in the seat as if he was jumping back and forth. His eyes were very animated with dilated pupils and he was very stimulated as he spoke about his multiple contacts with law enforcement throughout the day. He provided a citation that a State Trooper had given him earlier for driving after suspension and not having proof of insurance. He also stated that three Duluth Police officers had made contact with him at Super One that day. He told Officer Stracek that he was on parole for second-degree homicide. He claimed that he planned on taking the rear license plate cover off but it was too cold outside. He then said he was headed to Kwik Trip and was going to take the cover off there, even though he just made an excuse about it being too cold out. When asked if he takes medication, he admitted that he had a medical marijuana card and said he had used marijuana earlier in the day, around 10 a.m. Officer Stracek had the man perform field sobriety testing and then transported him to the Hermantown Police Department for a Drug Influence Evaluation. While being transported to a local hospital for a blood draw, the man admitted that he had eaten meth earlier while he was at his old apartment in Duluth. The man ultimately lodged at the St. Louis County Jail. Formal charges are pending the blood test results and may include 4th degree DUI Controlled Substance, 4th degree DUI Schedule I/II substance, possess marijuana in a motor vehicle, front/rear license plates required, driving after suspension, and no insurance.

Fraudulent Checks

On 02/23/23, Detective Dwyer was contacted by Fleet Farm loss prevention regarding three bad checks they had received. Detective Dwyer had previously been advised that a 41-year-old male was the suspect in a bad check case at Menards. While reviewing documents from the man's bank, Detective Dwyer observed three checks issued to Fleet Farm in January 2023. As the man had been issuing bad checks in the Duluth/Superior area, Detective Dwyer believed they had been issued to the Hermantown Fleet Farm and had asked them to look into it. The Hermantown Fleet Farm confirmed that the checks were written at their location and they were able to provide documentation showing that one had been written on 01/07/23 for \$691.47, the second was written on 01/08/23 for \$488.21, and the third had been written on 01/13/23 for \$1041.63. The man's bank later informed Detective Dwyer that none of the transactions would have posted to his account, as it had already been frozen due to a negative account balance. The day before the first Fleet Farm check was written, the balance was negative by just under \$2000 and by the end of July, the account was negative nearly \$5000. The bank advised that the man would have received account updates via his cell phone, over draft notices mailed to him, and the man had used the mobile banking app so he would have been able to see the account balance. This report was forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for two felony counts and one gross misdemeanor count of Issuance of Dishonored Check.

Theft

On 02/19/23, Walmart reported a shoplifting event that occurred earlier in February. Loss Prevention staff stated that the suspect used a fraudulent receipt and left the store with two items. Loss prevention told Officer Gottschald that they identified the 41-year-old male suspect because area Walmart stores have dealt with him in the past. He said that 02/08/23, the man had entered the store with no merchandise. He selected items and placed them into his cart before paying for the food



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items. He made no attempt to purchase the items on the bottom of the cart, which were a vacuum, a TV, and a winch. An associate asked to see the man's receipt; he provided the receipt to the associate and kept walking. After setting off the door alarm, the man removed the vacuum from the cart and brought it back inside before exiting again with his groceries and the unpaid TV and winch. The man's receipt, which the associate had kept, showed a combination of information from the Hermantown and Mountain Iron stores. In addition, the item names on the receipt did not match UPC numbers listed with them; the 43" TV showed a UPC for a half gallon of milk. The value of the TV was \$224.00 and the winch was valued at \$167.00. Officer Gottschald noted that the suspect had pawn many items in the last few months, but none of them matched the items stolen during this incident. She was unable to make contact with the suspect and mailed a shoplifting citation to the address on his driver's license.

Shortly after noon on 02/20/23, Officer Gottschald was advised of the theft of a camper. A Camping World employee stated that the camper belonged to a customer and was being kept in the lot across the street. A transport company went to pick the camper up for additional work and discovered that it was no longer there. The employee said the last time the camper had been worked on at Camping World was 02/09/23 and that all the doors would have been locked. Officer Gottschald contacted the camper's 71-year-old owner, who described it as a 2022 Wolf Pup bearing CA plates. He said the camper cost \$31,000 and provided photos of it. The camper has multiple stickers on it that would distinguish it. At this time, there are no suspects.

On 02/21/23, Walmart reported a shoplifting incident that had occurred days prior. Loss prevention provided video of the incident, which showed a 20-year-old male enter the store with an unidentified female at 7:30 p.m. on 02/16/23. The man selected a 50-inch Roku TV at 7:45 p.m. and exited the store two minutes later. He re-entered the store at 7:50 p.m., selected another 50-inch Roku TV at 7:52 p.m. and exited the store four minutes later. The unidentified female assisted the man in getting the TV into the vehicle before they left the parking lot. A citation for shoplifting was mailed to the address listed on the man's ID card.

Just before 9 a.m. on 02/23/23, Walmart reported a male with a shopping cart containing two garbage cans of high value items near the self-check registers. Officer Battaglia made contact with loss prevention staff, who stated the male had abandoned the shopping cart but exited the store with a Sony sound bar and other items. Loss prevention said the male was not cooperating and got into the backseat of a silver car, but they had recovered the stolen items. Officer Battaglia arrived on scene moments later and performed a traffic stop on the vehicle. When he advised the suspect that they needed to report to the loss prevention office, the man asked if he could just get the ticket. The man admitted to shoplifting, stating he had forgotten his wallet and had no cash or cards on him. The 20-year-old was cited for shoplifting. The value of the items he had taken was \$142.81.

On 02/25/23, shortly after 8 a.m., Walmart reported that they've been investigating a theft case involving a vendor. The 18-year-old suspect works for a company that sells phones in the Walmart electronics department and had been working at the Hermantown store for approximately two months. Loss Prevention stated that they believe the man had been stealing from the register during this time and had taken approximately \$7,200. The man later admitted to the theft and said he was unsure of the total he had taken. This incident is under investigation.