



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 04/09/23 to 04/15/23, the Hermantown PD had 202 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

At approximately 5 p.m. on 04/09/23, Officer Salo responded to a Highway 194 group home for the report of an assault. A 43-year-old female staff member stated that a 49-year-old client was on the phone when he began arguing with another resident. She said she was attempting to stop the fight from escalating when the man punched her. Officer Salo observed that the woman had a black eye from the incident. The resident told Officer Salo that he hit the woman one time in the face. When asked if it was right or wrong to hit her, he said, "I don't know. She was talking." He then agreed it was not okay to punch people in the face. The man was cited and left with crisis and night staff members.

Driving Under the Influence

On 04/15/23 at 4:48 p.m., Officer Enright was conducting routine traffic patrol when he observed a Nissan Pathfinder displaying tabs that expired in March 2022. When he ran the license plate, he also discovered that the registered owner's driver's license expired in February 2023. Officer Enright performed a traffic stop and approached the vehicle. Upon making contact with the driver, Officer Enright immediately detected the strong odor of an alcoholic beverage emitting from the man's breath. The man acknowledged that he knew the vehicle's tabs were expired. He provided his driver's license, but said his insurance was on his phone. The man looked around the front passenger area before raising his arms up as if he couldn't find it. Officer Enright pointed out a cell phone in the cup holder; the man picked it up and said the insurance info wasn't on that phone. The man admitted to having a couple drinks and agreed to perform field sobriety testing and as he was exiting the vehicle, Officer Enright observed an open can of Castle Danger beer in the driver side door cup holder. The man provided a breath sample into the preliminary breath test device, which showed a reading of .213% blood alcohol content. After he was placed under arrest, the man advised Officer Enright that his 8-year-old child was in the vehicle. He also stated there was marijuana in the center console of the vehicle. Officer Gottschald contacted the child's mother and stayed on scene until she arrived. While being processed for DWI at the Hermantown Police Department, the man admitted to having 3-4 vodka 7Ups. When asked if he felt the amount of alcohol he drank would affect his ability to drive a car, the man said no, but added that deciding to have his child in the car after he had a couple drinks was bad. The man was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail for 2nd degree DWI, .08 or more, child endangerment, expired tabs, and open bottle.

Fraud

On 04/11/23, a 35-year-old Hermantown resident reported that he is the process of trying to buy a house and when he checked his credit score, it was lower than he thought it should be. He then checked his credit report and discovered two unpaid bills for electricity accounts with companies in Dallas and Houston, Texas. He contacted the energy company in Houston, who advised him the account was opened with his name and social security number. The outstanding balance on that account is \$1,021.46. The company gave him the address and phone number associated with the



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account. The man then contacted the Dallas energy company, where the outstanding balance on the account is \$291. The company provided the address and phone number associated with the account, along with a gmail email address. The man told Officer Enright that he tried calling both phone numbers associated with the accounts, but they were non-working numbers. He filed claims with both companies in order to get the accounts appropriately flagged as fraudulent so he can get them off his credit report. Officer Enright determined that the addresses on both accounts were apartments. He contacted the apartment complexes, where associates provided names of the renters but stated they had no other personal identifying information for them.

Drugs

On 04/02/23, just before 10 p.m., Officer Prouse was monitoring Miller Trunk Highway traffic when he observed an Audi with an inoperable license plate light. As he drove up behind the vehicle, it quickly slowed down to approximately 44 mph in a 55 mph zone before eventually turning onto Highway 194. After being pulled over, the 41-year-old driver said he lived in the Twin Cities area and was up visiting his son. Officer Prouse noted that the front seat passenger would not make eye contact with him and was speaking with someone on his cell phone the entire time Officer Prouse was talking to the driver. Officer Prouse attempted to speak to the passenger, who initially would not acknowledge him. The passenger eventually turned and gave his name. Officer Prouse checked the name in police records and discovered that the man was not who he said he was. He was able to identify the passenger by a distinct tattoo on his neck. The man later admitted that he gave his brother's name because he had warrants. After the 36-year-old man was placed under arrest and handcuffed, he admitted to Officer Prouse that he had drugs in his underwear. A small baggie containing fentanyl was removed from the man's boxers. In the vehicle, officers located a glass jar containing methamphetamine behind the passenger seat. Both the driver and passenger denied that the jar was theirs. Officer Prouse advised the driver that he would be speaking to the county attorney about charges relating to the methamphetamine, as it was located in a vehicle registered to him. The passenger was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail on warrants, providing a false name, and 5th degree possession of a controlled substance.

Theft

On 04/10/23 at 4:23 p.m., Officer Enright was advised of a male shoplifter at Fleet Farm that fled in a vehicle. He was unable to locate the suspect at that time. Loss prevention provided surveillance video of the suspect concealing a \$199.99 power router. Officer Enright was able to identify the 38-year-old habitual shoplifting suspect. At that time, he did not locate any records indicating that the suspect had pawned the router, but he did discover that the man pawned a laser level on 04/07/23. Detective Dwyer later determined that Duluth Police had taken a report on 04/07/23 from the West Duluth Menards that the same suspect had stolen a laser level valued at \$424. On 04/10/23 at 6:23 p.m., Officer Stracek was dispatched to a shoplifting incident at the Hermantown Menards that had occurred just after



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4 p.m. The male suspect had taken a \$319 door lock. A loss prevention employee explained that the same man had stolen a laser level from the West Duluth Menards on 04/07/23. On 04/11/23, Detective Dwyer checked pawn records and discovered that the suspect pawned the stolen router and door lock at 4:46 p.m. the previous day, a very short time after the shopliftings took place. He was later able to speak to the suspect by phone; the man denied stealing anything and claimed that people bring him stuff to pawn before hanging up on Detective Dwyer. In total, the man stole \$942.99 between the three thefts. He is on probation in Minnesota for felony theft and is also on probation in Wisconsin. Reports have been forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office with a request to aggregate the three misdemeanor shopliftings to a gross misdemeanor theft charge.

On 04/11/23, Officer Gottschald was dispatched to a vehicle prowl at the Country Inn & Suites. A 36-year-old man stated that a generator worth \$500 was stolen out of the bed of his truck. He said there was no damage to the truck and the cab had not been entered. The man stated that this occurred after 11 p.m. the previous night and that he noticed the tailgate wasn't closed properly when he was getting ready to leave around 10:30 a.m.

On 04/11/23, shortly after 12:30 p.m., Officer Gottschald was dispatched to the report of a shoplifting at Walmart. Loss Prevention advised that a female walked out of the store with a 43-inch television in her cart. An employee at the exit door asked for a receipt, but the female said she never got one and continued out of the store, leaving in a Ford Explorer. During her investigation, Officer Gottschald discovered that a matching television was pawned at 12:45 p.m. She compared Walmart surveillance video with a photo of the woman who pawned the television and determined that it was the same individual. A citation for theft was mailed to the address on the 19-year-old woman's driver's license.

On the morning of 04/12/23, an 18-year-old woman reported that her vehicle was broken into overnight in the parking lot of a Hermantown apartment complex. She told Officer Solem that she brought groceries in the previous night and that she had left her purse and fanny pack on the front passenger seat overnight. She said she was confident she had locked the vehicle when she went inside her apartment. The woman stated that when she went out to her car in the morning, she found that the rear passenger side window had been broken out and her purse and fanny pack had been taken. She estimated the value of the two at approximately 70. Earlier that morning, a 28-year-old man reported that his vehicle had been entered overnight in the same apartment complex lot. The man told Officer Salo that someone had entered the vehicle and looked through the glove box and center console, but he did not believe anything had been taken. He wasn't sure if the vehicle had been locked, but said there was no damage. The man stated that his wife had already left for work with the car.