



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

AROUND TOWN

During the week of 05/07/23 to 05/13/23, the Hermantown PD had 215 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

K-9 Officers

Tuuko
Jack

Records

Jessica Sorensen
Dana Ross
Samantha Knapp

Assault

Just before 3:30 a.m. on 05/07/23, a Jamilee Drive resident reported that his girlfriend left his house, is intoxicated, and may have a 9mm pistol. Officers located the woman as she pulled her vehicle into the Harley Davidson parking lot. They quickly established that she was not in possession of a firearm. Officer Battaglia and Sgt. Pernu responded to the man's address and immediately observed visible signs of injury to his face and upper chest area. He explained that his girlfriend lives in Duluth but they are in the process of getting back together. He said that she came to his house after work and they had a couple beers. He stated that they later went to a bar and had a couple more beers. He said that his girlfriend had a couple shots at the bar, as well, before going back to his house and having a couple more drinks. The 52-year-old told officers that at one point, the woman grabbed his phone and began going through it, freaking out when she found a girl on his phone who had a similar name to his ex-girlfriend. The man said that his girlfriend bit him in the lip and clawed his face, and later slammed his hand in the car door. He denied medical attention and later admitted to officers that alcohol definitely played a factor in that night's events. Officer Solem took a statement from the 49-year-old woman, who was very emotional while speaking about what happened that evening. She told him she did not want to drive and had intentions of parking her vehicle in the parking lot to wait for a ride, but that she needed to leave the man's residence to get away from him. Officer Solem noted dried blood on her face and she explained that he had pinned her down on the bed with his face shoved into hers and she bit his lip to get him off of her, causing his blood to drip onto her face. She said that her boyfriend had already had a couple beers when she arrived at the residence. She admitted to looking at his phone, but stated that he asked her to look something up and when she unlocked the phone, Snapchat was open to a conversation with a woman. She claimed that she gave his phone and wasn't mad about it, but said that a male friend had been texting her that night and her boyfriend didn't like it. The woman explained that she attempted to leave and her boyfriend pinned her down, head butted her, and threw her purse across the room causing her belongings to go everywhere. She also showed Officer Solem bruises on her arm that she stated were from this incident. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for review of possible domestic assault charges against both parties.

Driving Under the Influence

On 05/11/23 at 7:39 p.m., officers were dispatched to check the welfare of male that was passed out in a vehicle at the Korner Store on Hermantown Road. The caller stated that he attempted to knock on the window, but the male did not wake up. When Officer Solem arrived on scene, he knocked on the window and announced himself, but the male remained slumped over. The man only responded when Officer Solem opened the door and announced himself. Officer Solem detected a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage emitting from the man and noted that he was drooling and had slow, slurred speech. The 35-year-old man denied using any drugs or drinking alcoholic beverages that day. Due to elevated blood pressure and heart rate, the man was transported by ambulance to the hospital. Chief Crace, who was working a Toward Zero Death special traffic enforcement shift, followed the ambulance to the hospital. While there, he noted that the man was disoriented, his speech was slurred and at times not comprehensible, and he repeated the same questions over and over regarding what was going to happen to him. Chief Crace also noted that he smelled an overwhelming odor of alcoholic beverage emitting from the man. The man was placed into a wheelchair because his balance was very unsteady. He provided a preliminary breath sample with a reading of .260% blood alcohol content. A blood draw was conducted and the man was lodged at the St. Louis County Jail. Charges are pending results of the blood test and will be enhanced to 1st degree felony, as the man had three prior Driving While Impaired offenses in the last ten years.

Drugs

Just after noon on 05/09/23, Officer Stracek observed a vehicle with very dark window tint that appeared to be under the legal 50% limit. He ran a registration check on the vehicle and discovered that the younger male driver has been involved in a multiple recent traffic stops which involved a felony amount of marijuana. He made a u-turn to conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle, but the driver took off before he was able to activate his emergency lights. The vehicle made a quick turn onto Radar Road without using a blinker and as Officer Stracek turned onto the road, the vehicle was speeding to turn down the first driveway. The driver parked halfway down the driveway and stopped as Officer Stracek pulled up behind him with lights activated. The 20-year-old driver admitted to trying to elude him and stated he has "a lot of speeding tickets" and



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didn't want to get pulled over. Officer Stracek detected the odor of marijuana in the vehicle and the man handed over suspected marijuana and paraphernalia. More paraphernalia and a drug kit belonging to the 18-year-old female passenger were located during a vehicle search. A window tint meter showed that the rear windows were 5%. The man claimed he needed to bring the vehicle to a shop to get the tint removed, but Officer Stracek pointed out that it was just a film he could take off. The man had been warned for window tint by Duluth Police less than three months prior. Officer Stracek cited the man for no turn signal, window tint, marijuana in a motor vehicle and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Traffic

On 05/09/23 at approximately noon, Officer Stracek was at a Jamebard Road address investigating an unrelated report. While there, he heard a dirt bike stop at the edge of the property before taking off down Jamebard toward Midway Road. He believed the dirt bike was operated by a 26-year-old man he knew to have multiple warrants. Officer Stracek headed toward Midway Road but did not locate the dirt bike at that time. He believed the operator was driving recklessly at a high rate of speed to elude him after seeing his squad car at the residence. At approximately 4:45 p.m. on the same date, Officer Stracek was traveling Midway Road near Jamebard when he observed a dirt bike approaching in the oncoming lane of traffic. He believed this to be the same dirt bike from earlier and he made a u-turn, activating his lights and siren as the dirt bike operator hit the throttle. The bike turned in a driveway in the 4200 block of Midway Road and Officer Stracek followed as the bike drove across the lawn before heading back to Midway Road through a grass field. He then pursued the dirt bike southbound as it fled on the snowmobile trail running alongside Midway Road. The operator of the dirt bike went through the wet ditch to the rear of Faith Baptist Church at the corner of Midway and Maple Grove Roads. The driver accelerated into the empty parking lot and as the operator looked over his shoulder at the squad car, the dirt bike's foot peg caught the stone retaining wall, throwing the driver over the handlebars. The driver attempted to get back on the fallen bike but quickly decided to flee on foot. Officer Stracek closed the distance and tackled the man to the ground. The driver continued to resist and physically pull away. Officer Stracek eventually used the spark feature of his Taser to regain the man's compliance. Assisting officers arrived on scene and the man was handcuffed. Before being lodged at the St. Louis County Jail, the man was transported to a local hospital to be checked out after his accident. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney's office for charges of fleeing in a motor vehicle, fleeing on foot, obstruction, driving after revocation, and off road vehicle with no registration.

Theft

Shortly before 11 a.m. on 05/08/23, Officer Enright was dispatched to a theft call at a construction site on Lavaque Road. The reporting party said that before leaving the site the previous Friday, the metal storage box for tools was locked with a padlock. When he arrived to the job site on the morning of 05/08/23, the storage box lid was open and he noticed that the hasp for the lock had been cut through. He provided descriptions for the stolen items and indicated that the total value was \$7,592.

On 05/08/23, Sunbelt Rentals reported that the front license plate was missing off one of their semi trucks. The reporting party stated that the last time they noticed the plate on the truck was the morning of 05/04/23.

On 05/09/23 at approximately 7:20 a.m., Walmart reported a female shoplifter who had failed to ring up a sewing machine and scanned a bottle of glass cleaner at \$2.97 three times in lieu of scanning two other cleaning products that were \$11.97 and \$8.97. The 45-year-old woman told Officer Enright that she didn't feel well and her head hurt, so she just wanted to get out to her car. She claimed she thought all the cleaners were the same price, missing the sewing machine was a mistake, and that she never looks at prices when she's shopping. Officer Enright told her that the items she scanned properly was \$73.58, which was almost half the total value of the items she either under-scanned or failed to scan altogether at \$126.90. The woman said she could understand why Officer Enright found it hard to believe she wouldn't have noticed that, but said, "My reality is not your reality." She was issued a citation for theft and was trespassing from all Walmart properties.

Just after 8:30 a.m. on 05/09/23, Walmart loss prevention reported a shoplifting in progress where three females and a male were aimlessly going through the store and placing items inside a garbage can. He stated that one female



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appeared to be acting as a lookout before the group split up and two of the females started loading a different cart with groceries. Approximately an hour later, loss prevention staff advised Officer Stracek that the oldest female entered the self-checkouts and started ringing up items. He stated that all four joined up again at the register and the woman did not scan everything in the carts. Officer Stracek made contact with the group after they were brought to the loss prevention office. He identified them as a 33-year-old woman, her 17- and 18-year-old daughters, and a 19-year-old male friend of one of the teenagers. The younger girl admitted to stealing clothes because she couldn't afford them. The older sister said she wasn't aware of the others shoplifting and that she just placed groceries in the cart for her mother to buy. The mother told Officer Stracek that she figured the kids were up to something but said she wasn't involved. When he confronted her about not scanning everything in her cart, she claimed her ADHD distracted her. He told her that seemed unlikely since she failed to scan over \$500 worth of items. The male appeared as if he was under the influence of a controlled substance; he was jumping in his seat, couldn't sit still, and kept reaching after he was told not to. He retrieved a stolen men's razor out of his pocket and set it on the table. Officer Stracek confiscated a meth pipe that the man took out of his pocket. When checking the man's pockets, he located a small baggie of suspected marijuana and folded up tin foil. When Officer Stracek later placed the drug items into evidence at the Hermantown Police Department, he discovered that the small folded piece of tinfoil contained a blue M30 pill. These pills are known as counterfeit fentanyl pills. He also noted that the older woman in the group had been arrested the previous for sale of that style M30 pills. Reports were forwarded to the prosecuting attorney for charges of gross misdemeanor theft for the 33-year-old and 17-year-old women. Charges of gross misdemeanor theft were requested for the man, along with charges of 5th degree possession, possession of a small amount of marijuana, and possession of drug paraphernalia. Loss prevention provided a total of \$586.01 for the theft. All parties were trespassed from Walmart properties.

Shortly after 11:30 a.m. on 05/09/23, Camping World reported the theft of a camper. The general manager advised that the theft occurred in mid- to late-March. He told Officer Enright that he didn't report it stolen immediately because he wanted to check with corporate to see if the trailer was accounted for anywhere else. The man explained that Camping World had purchased the camper in January and it had been parked in their lot, locked with the keys inside. He said the 2021 Forest River Wildwood camper is valued at approximately \$22,000.

On 05/09/23, a Johnson Road resident reported that he had three bows stolen from his garage within the last month. He told Officer Prouse that he last used the bows on 04/10/23 and he noticed the night before that they were gone. He said there was no forced entry, as the garage door had been left unlocked.

Trespass

On the afternoon of 05/12/23, Officer Enright was advised of a trespassing complain at Walmart. Loss Prevention attempted to confront the man, but he walked through the parking lot and across Loberg Avenue into the woods. Officers were unable to locate the man at that time. Loss Prevention later advised that they did not have evidence that the man had been shoplifting, but they were able to provide surveillance video of the man in the store, along with a trespass notice from December 2022 that clearly stated the man was trespassed from all Walmart properties. Officer Enright attempted to contact the suspect by phone but the only number in police records was a non-working number. A citation was mailed the 40-year-old man for trespassing.

Fraud

On 05/09/23, a 33-year-old resident reported identity fraud. The woman stated she had received a bill for a medical visit. She discovered that an unknown person had used her name and insurance information during a hospital visit in Kentucky in 2021. She stated she hasn't been to Kentucky for 20 years and the billing company required that she report the fraud to her local police department. At this time, there has been no financial loss to the woman.