



# The BLOTTER

Your place for up to date Police information

## Reporting Incidents...How to help us be successful

I often hear people are uneasy about calling 911 because they do not want to bother us. I am here to tell you that you are not going to bother us by calling 911 to report incidents. Often times crimes are solved and prevented because an alert citizen calls 911. If you see something that doesn't seem right, it likely isn't right. Please do not feel like you are bothering us. After all, we are here for you!

I'd like to discuss when to call 911 vs when to call or email me. I will always urge you to call 911 to report issues and incidents. One of the primary reasons for this is documentation. When 911 is called, a police case number is generated with the date and time the call was made as well as initial information. Documentation is crucial to determining if the issue is part of a larger, ongoing issue or not. Often times we rely on this



(Duluth Police Officers responding to a call)



(Actual Duluth Police Dispatch Center)

information when deploying extra resources to an area. So, please call immediately when you see something. Do not wait a day or two or three. This will cause a delay in issues being reported and in the long run, effect the level of service you, as a community, are getting from the police department.

If there are times that you would like to let me know of an issue that is ongoing, but not happening at the time, then please email or call me! I'd love to stop by and discuss the issues and look at some creative ways to hopefully solve the issue you are facing.

The entire Police Department and I are here for you, please do not ever hesitate to call us. You deserve the highest level of service from our agency!

## Panhandling... what to know and how to help

A U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing an Arizona pastor to put up signs directing people to church services has become the basis for many lower courts across the nation to allow broader First Amendment protections, overturning anti-begging ordinances on the grounds that the government generally can't outlaw speech on particular subjects.

So what does this mean for our community? These decisions have essentially determined the act of holding a sign and asking another for money is free speech and therefore protected by the 1st Amendment. As you may know, In July of 2018 our City Council voted to repeal our City Ordinance which addresses begging in public, as it was unconstitutional. In August of 2018 it was officially repealed.

While panhandling, or asking people for money, is protected by the 1st Amendment, there are things that one cannot do while panhandling. People are not allowed to violate other City Ordinances and State Laws while asking for money. Soliciting in the roadway is not legal for obvious safety reasons and is prohibited by State Law. Furthermore, obstructing traffic, blocking sidewalks, creating disturbances, and/or being aggressive

and alarming others are actions that are not legal either. The bottom line is that if someone makes you feel unsafe by following you after asking for money, being aggressive while asking or another action that causes fear, please call 911! Please feel free to take a look at the state law regarding disorderly conduct at <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/609.72>. The City also has an Ordinance that addresses the same behaviors outline in the State Statute.

As a Police Department we need to balance the rights of all citizens of our city, businesses, tourists and panhandlers alike. This creates a situation that can be difficult to navigate at times.

Our mission is to provide a safe Duluth for all by strengthening relationships and serving in a respectful, caring and selfless manner. With that being said, if you find yourself wanting to help a panhandler, we ask that you make that donation to the CHUM, Duluth Gospel Mission or another organization that helps those in need. Donations to these organizations will ensure that donated money is providing much needed shelter, food and personal care items!

## More vintage photos from your Police Dept.

