



CITY OF HARRISONBURG
POLICE
DEPARTMENT

POLICE CHIEF KELLEY WARNER

101 NORTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22802

OFFICE: (540) 437-2600

FAX: (540) 437-2691

WWW.HARRISONBURGVA.GOV/POLICE

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Contact: Michael Parks, Harrisonburg Director of Communications
540.432.7701
Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov

Individual charged after prank call results in business evacuation, emergency response

HARRISONBURG, Va. – A local woman has been charged with a crime after her prank call resulted in the evacuation of an East Market Street business and the emergency response of Harrisonburg Police Department and Harrisonburg Fire Department crews.

Riley Mercado, 19, of Harrisonburg, has been charged with “Use of profane, threatening, or indecent language over public airways or by other methods”, a misdemeanor charge, after calling Kohl’s at approximately 8 p.m. Monday evening and warning that people should leave the store due to an emergency. Kohl’s management evacuated the building and informed the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Emergency Communications Center of a possible bomb threat after receiving the call, resulting in nine HPD units and two fire engines, one fire truck, a battalion chief, a command officer and an EMS unit with HFD staging around the building as part of the City’s emergency response.

An immediate HPD investigation, aided by James Madison University Police, determined the location of the call, and officers questioned Mercado about the incident. She admitted to making the call as part of a number of prank calls she and her friends had made that evening to area businesses.

HPD and HFD consider all matters such as these to be serious in nature and urge the community to not take any actions that could cause panic and possible harm to members of the public or emergency responders.

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,990 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*