



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2008-03719

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: PSNI OFFICER's CAUGHT SPEEDING

Request:

Question 1 - How many PSNI officers (excluding those off-duty) were caught speeding on speeding cameras in the last two financial years (2006/07 and 2007/08)?

Question 2 - How many PSNI officers (excluding those off-duty) were disciplined after being caught speeding on speeding cameras in the last two financial years (2006/07 and 2007/08)?

Question 3 - How many off-duty PSNI officers were caught speeding on speeding cameras in the last two financial years (2006/07 and 2007/08)?

Question 4 - How many off-duty PSNI officers were disciplined after being caught speeding on speeding cameras in the last two financial years (2006/07 and 2007/08)?

Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

Answer 1 - In a clarification of your request sent to you on 1 August 2008 you were made aware that we could supply the number of occasions where a speeding violation committed by a police vehicle is cancelled under our statutory exemption (Art 42 of The Road Traffic Regulation (NI) Order 1997) but that this does not capture all violations as there are occasions where the circumstances do not meet the criteria for cancellation and the matter proceeds. Our system does not highlight the vehicle as a police vehicle in these cases where the matter proceeds. You were asked if you wished to be supplied with this information and you agreed to this. Please see below;

2006 Cancellations 45

2007 Cancellations 108

2008 Cancellations 67 to date

These figures relate to the number of cancellations of excess speed notices issued to police vehicles. It should be noted that before a notice is cancelled, each case is examined and confirmation obtained that the exemption provided under Art

42 of The Road Traffic Regulation (NI) Order 1997 for emergency vehicles applies in the circumstances.

You also agreed to be supplied with the number of officers who were convicted of speeding whilst on duty and reported to the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI. During the financial year 2006/07 a total of two officers were convicted of speeding whilst on duty. For the financial year of 2007/08 one officer was convicted of speeding whilst on duty.

Answer 2 - After clarification this question was revised to the number of officers who were formally disciplined after being convicted of speeding whilst on duty and reported to the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI. During the financial years of 2006/07 and 2007/08 no officers were formally disciplined as a consequence of being convicted of the offence of speeding whilst on duty.

Answer 3- After clarification this question was revised to the number of officers who were convicted of speeding whilst off duty and reported to the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI. It was explained to you in the clarification that the occupation of an offending motorist is not something that the PSNI would normally be aware of. During the financial year 2006/07 three police officers were convicted of speeding whilst off duty. In the financial year 2007/08 six police officers were convicted of speeding whilst off duty.

Answer 4- After clarification with yourself this question has been revised to the number of officers who were formally disciplined after being convicted of speeding whilst off duty and reported to the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI.

In the financial year 2006/2007, one police officer was formally disciplined as a consequence of being convicted of speeding whilst off duty. It should be noted that this officer was also convicted of another motoring offence at the same time. During the financial year 2007/2008 no police officer was formally disciplined as a consequence of being convicted of speeding whilst off duty.

With limited exceptions formal disciplinary proceedings cannot take place until criminal proceedings have terminated (this includes motoring offences).

You should be aware that convictions do not necessarily occur within the same year as detection and formal disciplinary proceedings do not necessarily occur within the same year as detection or conviction.

As indicated previously to you by e mail, the PSNI does not record specifically the issue of fixed penalty notices to police officers and this would include those issued as a consequences of speeding cameras. The figures quoted in response to your request reflect convictions of police officers, both on and off duty, that have been reported to the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI which has responsibility for internal discipline relating to police officers. The convictions relate to detections by a variety of means. All the details requested are not recorded centrally and were obtained from the interrogation of several databases and the manual examination of a number of files. Information extracted in this manner may not be as accurate as that extracted from a single central database.

It should be noted that each case is examined on an individual basis to determine the level and nature of misconduct of the officer and the extent to which the PSNI's Code of Ethics has been breached. The seriousness of the offence, the circumstances surrounding its commission and its potential impact will dictate the level of action to be pursued and the misconduct sanction ultimately imposed.

Formal discipline i.e. where an officer appears before a misconduct panel, will only be initiated where it is likely that the officer, if found guilty, would receive a sanction of a caution, reprimand, fine, reduction in pay, reduction in rank, requirement to resign as an alternative to dismissal or dismissal.

The Police Service expects its staff to behave professionally, ethically and with the utmost integrity at all times. Whilst the Service takes extremely seriously any allegation of wrongdoing, the number of cases must be put into context of the overall number of police service i.e. just over 9000 officers at the date of your request.

United Kingdom Police Services do not use generic systems to capture information. For this reason the PSNI's response to your questions should not be used for comparison purposes with any other Police Service.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock

Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that all PSNI replies under Freedom of Information will be released simultaneously into the public domain via our website @ www.psni.police.uk.

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.