



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-03674

Keyword: Complaints/Discipline

Subject: POLICE OFFICERS CONVICTED OF VEHICLE RELATED OFFENCES

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many police officers, employed by or working for the Police Service of Northern Ireland, have been issued with warnings, fines, or charges, for speeding or motor vehicle-related offences?

Question 2

How many of the police officers in (1) above have been convicted, sentenced, or issued with a formal warning as a result of the offence described in (1)?

I would like the information for (1) and (2) above to date from 1 January 2006 to 20 November 2009 (inclusive). I would also be grateful if you could provide me with:

- the exact date of the incident and any subsequent action taken on it by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, or any other body,
- the rank of the police officer concerned,
- the consequences of each incident (in terms of what further action was taken against the police officer concerned and the consequences as regards any other individuals involved).

I would also be grateful if the breakdown for each incident could include whether the police officer was on-duty or off-duty at the time of the incident and whether he/she was in a police vehicle at the time of the incident.

For part (2) above I would appreciate if the data could be provided both as a percentage of (1) and also in as much further detail as possible under the criteria listed previously.

After clarification you have refined your request to:

The number of police officers convicted of motoring related offences (including adult cautions) in each year and who are still serving within the PSNI. The number of officers in each rank along with a range of penalties imposed by the courts and a range of disciplinary outcomes and whether any of the prosecutions were as a result of a Police Ombudsman's investigation.

Answer

2006

There are twenty one officers still serving with the PSNI who were convicted of motoring related offences during 2006.

Twenty Constables and one Inspector were convicted.

Offences include Careless Driving, No R Plates Displayed, Excess Speed, Failure to Produce Driving Licence, Drink Driving, No Insurance and Dangerous Driving.

Court outcomes include Disqualification, Fine, Penalty Points, R Period Extended and Adult Caution.

Disciplinary outcomes include Reduction in Pay, Written Warning and No Action Taken. One case is still pending.

2007

Eleven officers are still serving with the PSNI who were convicted of motoring offences during 2007.

All eleven officers were Constables.

Offences include No Driving Licence, Excess Speed, Careless Driving, Drink Driving and No Insurance.

Court outcomes include Fine, Disqualification, Penalty Points, Adult Caution and Conditional Discharge.

Disciplinary outcomes include Reduction in Pay, Reprimand, Written Warning, Advice and Guidance, Reminded of High Standard Expected from a Police Officer, Dealt with by Local Command and No Action Taken.

2008

Eleven officers are still serving with the PSNI who were convicted of motoring related offences during 2008.

Ten Constables and one Inspector were convicted.

Offences include Breach of Traffic Sign, Careless Driving, Excess Speed, Permitting No Insurance and Dangerous Driving.

Court outcomes include fine, penalty points, disqualification, and adult caution.

Disciplinary outcomes include Written Warning, Advice and Guidance, Reminded of the High Standards Expected from a Police Officer and No Action Taken. One case is still pending.

2009 (to 20.11.09)

Ten officers are still serving with the PSNI who have been convicted of motoring related offences during 2009 (to 20.11.09).

Eight Constables, one Sergeant and one Constable Part Time have been convicted.

Offences include Drink Driving, Dangerous Driving, Careless Driving, Obstruction, No Insurance,

Failure to Report an Accident and No MOT.

Court outcomes include Disqualification, Fine, Penalty Points and Adult Caution.

Disciplinary outcomes include Written Warnings and Advice and Guidance. Eight cases are still pending.

None of the convictions from 1.1.2006 to 20.11.2009 were as a consequence of a Police Ombudsman's investigation.

The figures represent the number of police officers convicted and not the number of convictions. An officer may have been convicted of a number of offences relating to the same incident and/or may have been convicted as a consequence of being involved in more than one incident.

The information supplied represents the incidents reported to the Professional Standards Department of the PSNI and does not include any minor offence that may have been dealt with at local management level. All the details requested are not recorded centrally and were obtained from the interrogation of several databases across a number of different categories 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.

Conviction does not necessarily fall into the same year as detection.

The figures do not include the issue of fixed penalty notices. The PSNI does not specifically record the issue of fixed penalty notices to police officers.

Officers convicted of criminal offences, in addition to being dealt with through the normal criminal process, are also subject to internal misconduct investigations which may lead to misconduct hearings and sanctions. 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.

Whilst the Service takes extremely seriously any allegation of wrongdoing, the number of cases must be put into context of the overall number of PSNI officers, i.e. just under 9,000.

United Kingdom Police Services do not use generic systems to capture information. For this reason 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 the Freedom of Information Team 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 PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psnipolice.uk .

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