



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-03800

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Resources used in Making TV Shows.

Request and Answer:

Question

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please could you provide me with the following information about the use of police resources in the making of any television programs, including Top Gear:

Please could you provide details of all occasions in which police resources have been used in the production of television shows over the last five financial years, including the name of the show, the resources used (cars, numbers of officers, helicopter etc), how much time was taken up by the operation (including officer hours / days etc).

Please also supply the costs of the operation and indicate whether this was met, in part or fully, by the television production company.

If the cost of responding to this request will exceed the limit under the Act, please provide the details for just the last two financial years.

Answer

On 8th December 2009 we advised you that a rough estimate of the time it would take to gather this information would greatly exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 (18 hours), and advised that if you were to refine your request to the resources and police time used in the making of one particular television programme, we may be able to provide a response within the cost threshold. You subsequently advised us to limit the information to "current affairs shows - as well as entertainment / dramas etc".

Unfortunately, despite limiting the information as directed, it is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland's Media and PR Department have advised that in order to compile this information, even if only for current affairs/drama or entertainment programmes over the last two financial years, each facility file would need to be looked at in-depth. As this information is not held centrally, the press officers and police officers involved in each programme would then need

to provide individual details of their input into the show and resources used during each. Depending on the programme this could range from 1 hour to 1 entire weekend of filming and could also involve weeks of planning via phone-calls, emails and meetings.

In the past 2 years the PSNI have facilitated 141 live and pre-recorded TV programmes. These figures are not broken down by type of programme. To do this alone would require at least 15 minutes to look at each of the 141 files in order to establish what type of programme the facility was for. Therefore to even establish how many 'current affairs/drama or entertainment' programmes we have contributed to would take in excess of 35 hours.

In relation to the specific query regarding Top Gear, this was dealt with by the Belfast Harbour Police and not the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Please advise if you wish us to transfer the request on your behalf. Alternatively you can forward your request to barry.johnston@belfast-harbour.co.uk

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

In order to provide information within the cost threshold we have contacted each of our District Command Units for any information that they may hold in relation to TV Programmes made within their local command areas. Whilst there is no standardised way to collate the requested information within the eight different Districts, some were able to retrieve some limited information within the cost threshold. Please see the table below containing these details.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this 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 letter.

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.

Dates	Company	Police Resources	Police Purpose	Cost	
17-18 February 2009	Small Island Productions	1+4	Traffic control	None	
21 May 2009	Mallisons TV Productions	0+2	Traffic Control	Company Invoiced	
Summer 09	Elements Production	0	Explosives Enquiry	N/A	
	Victoira Centre TV Commercial	Not Held	Not held	Invoiced £484	
	Film Company – Man on the Run	1 Sergeant, 8 Constables	103 hours Police time	£4,100 Company not invoiced	
	Film Company – 50 Dead Men Walking	4 Constables	38 hours Police time	£1,177 Company not invoiced	
	Film Company – Ghost Machine	2 Consables	12 hours Police time	£372 Company not invoiced	
		2 Constables	60 hours total Police time		