



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01442

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: SEARCHES OF DWELLING HOUSES

Request and Answer:

Question

In the last 5 years, how many homes have the PSNI accidentally broke into/raided to find it's the wrong house?
Clarification- The PSNI has interpreted the term " broken into/raided" as being searches.

Answer

The cost of complying with your request for information would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information (Fees Regulations) 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450.

To locate, retrieve and summarise the information requested, would require each District Command Unit in Northern Ireland to examine each search record for the past 5 years held by them to establish if the wrong address had been searched. This amounts to a large number of search records and the Districts have estimated that it would take in excess of 201hrs, which is far in excess of the appropriate limit determined by the Secretary of State at £450 (18hrs).

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.

The PSNI have also considered if we can be of assistance to you in refining your request to bring it within the appropriate cost. A possible method of refinement could be to request the number of claims for compensation received by the PSNI in relation to damages to residences mistakenly searched using warrant or PACE where the address of the offender is incorrect. This however would not include any searches where the householder has not submitted a claim. The PSNI has published figures for the period October 2007 to October 2008 which is available on the PSNI web site using the following link:

http://www.psni.police.uk/compensation_following_searches_of_private_property.pdf

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

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 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 @ <http://www.psni.police.uk/>

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