



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01044

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: STRIP SEARCHES 2004 - 2008

Request and Answer:

Question

Please disclose the information below under the FOI Act for each of the following years:
2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004

For each year please provide a breakdown of the number of strip searches carried out by the force.

If you are unable to provide information for the past 5 years due to cost please disclose the information for 2008 followed by each previous year until the cost limit is reached.

Answer

The cost of complying with your request for information in full would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450. To retrieve all of the information you have requested would involve a manual search of around 30,000 custody records per annum. These records were held as paper records until the year 2007. Figures for strip searches where the subject is in custody are available for 2007-2008 but PSNI record these as 'intimate searches'. In your initial request you have agreed to a form of refinement in order that the cost of complying with it may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit' therefore I am able to provide the following:

The matches found for Intimate Searches were: -

In 2007

A total of 37 custody records were flagged as having an Intimate search completed.

In 2008

A total of 37 custody records were flagged as having an Intimate search completed.

I would advise however that these figures may be unreliable but would represent the minimum numbers for the respective years.

'Intimate Searches' are defined by [Article 56 of the Police and Criminal Evidence \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989](#) as amended, and Annex A of the associated [Codes of Practice](#).

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 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.