



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-01420

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: USE OF TASERS

Request and Answer:

Question 1

For each year since tasers were introduced by the force, how many times has their use been authorised?

Answer

The authority to issue, deploy or use Taser can be found in the PSNI Taser Service Procedure 06/08 Section 8 (1) and (2), which can be found the PSNI internet site and the guidance states the following;

(1) Authority for Issue

An officer of substantive Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) rank or above, or an officer who has been appointed as Acting ACC, may provide a standing authority to issue Taser to suitably trained police officers for use as a less lethal option in firearms and non-public order situations.

(2) Authority for Use

In circumstances where police officers have been deployed to a situation, the authorisation to utilise their firearm will also include the authority to use any other less lethal option or technology with which they have been issued including where appropriate Taser. In these situations it would be inappropriate for Commanders of supervisory police officers to attempt to restrict police officers to a particular less lethal technology or use of force option.

Officers from Specialist Operations Branch and from Armed Response Units carry Taser on a daily basis as a less lethal option. On all occasions when the Taser has been used by PSNI officers it's use has been authorised. For the number of times Taser has been used please refer to the answer to question 4.

Question 2

For each year since tasers were introduced by the force, how many times have they been deployed?

Answer

As previously stated above, Taser is carried on a daily basis. If by the terminology 'deployed' the author means 'carried' then this question has already been answered. If by the terminology 'deployed' the author means 'used' then the PSNI definition of 'use' can be found at Section 11.8 in PSNI Taser Service Procedure and is as follows:

11.8 The term 'use of the Taser' will include any of the following actions carried out in an operational setting:

- 1 Drawing of a device in circumstances where any person perceives the action as a use of force or threat of a use of force, whether or not this is accompanied by a verbal warning, sparking of the device or placing of the laser sight red dot onto a subject
- 2 Firing of a device so that the barbs are discharged at a subject
- 3 Application and discharge of a device in 'drive stun' mode to a subject

For the number of times that the Taser has been 'used' see the answer to question 4

Question 3

For each year since tasers were introduced by the force, how many times have they been actually fired.

Answer

For the number of times that the Taser has been 'fired' i.e. discharged see the answer to question 4

Question 4

In each instance please state the age and gender of the person targeted or tasered (or state if an animal/other)

Answer

The attached table outlines **all** uses of Taser as defined by the PSNI Taser Service Procedure from January 2008 to 30th April 2009. No animals have been the subject of a Taser discharge to date.

Question 5

Please also provide where and when the incident happened and reasons for the authorisation/deployment/usage for each instance.

Answer

Listed in the answer at question 4 are the dates of each of the Taser uses and the police district in which it took place. In each of the incidents listed at answer 4 the officer who 'used' the Taser, must have satisfied themselves that the use of the Taser was necessary in order to prevent a risk of death or serious injury. (See PSNI Taser Guidance Section 10.3.) The majority of serious incidents involved dealing with a threat either from a knife or a firearm. The eight discharges are currently the subject of an investigation by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

Question 6

How many officers in the force are trained to use the taser?

Answer

118 PSNI officers are trained to use Taser.

Question 7

How many of the guns does the force currently own?

Answer

PSNI currently possess 83 Tasers.

Question 8

What plans exist to extend the use of taser within the force? When will these come into effect? Specifically, how many officers will be trained to use them?

Answer

There are no plans to extend the use of Taser within the PSNI.

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.psni.police.uk

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

**TASER STATISTICS
FROM JANUARY 2008/APRIL 2009**

DISCHARGED									
Date	Male	Female	District	Age 18 or under	Age 19-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age over 60
16/08/2008	1	0	G			1			
28/11/2008	1	0	A		1				
31/12/2008	1	0	D				1		
24/01/2009	1	0	A		1				
11/03/2009	1	0	B			1			
02/04/2009	1	0	A			1			
11/04/2009	1	0	B				1		
11/04/2009	1	0	B				1		
TOTAL	8	0		0	2	3	3	0	0
USED									
Date	Male	Female	District	Age 18 or under	Age 19-29	Age 30-39	Age 40-49	Age 50-59	Age over 60
04/07/2008	1		B		1				
28/07/2008	1		A				1		
28/07/2008	1		A				1		
28/07/2008	1		A				1		
16/08/2008	1		G			1			
16/08/2008	1		G			1			
01/09/2008		1	F		1				
01/09/2008	1		F		1				
01/09/2008	1		F		1				
01/09/2008	1		F				1		
01/09/2008	1		F		1				
08/10/2008	1		H		1				
06/12/2008	1		F		1				
06/12/2008	1		F		1				
22/12/2008	1		B			1			
29/12/2008	1		H					1	
31/12/2008	1		D				1		
03/01/2009	1		D			1			
03/01/2009	1		D			1			
05/01/2009	1		A		1				
06/01/2009		1	D				1		
06/01/2009	1		D	1					
06/01/2009	1		D		1				
06/01/2009		1	D		1				
05/02/2009	1		E			1			
08/02/2009	1		A		1				
13/02/2009	1		D			1			
13/02/2009	1		D			1			
20/02/2009	1		A				1		
17/03/2009	1		A					1	
17/03/2009	1		A					1	
29/03/2009	1		H				1		
05/04/2009	1		B		1				
10/04/2009	1		B					1	
10/04/2009	1		B					1	
11/04/2009	1		C				1		
12/04/2009	1		H		1				
13/04/2009	1		C			1			
14/04/2009	1		C		1				
14/04/2009	1		A	1(18)					
14/04/2009	1		A				1		
16/04/2009	1		B			1			
16/04/2009	1		B			1			
16/04/2009	1		B			1			
16/04/2009	1		B				1		
20/04/2009	1		B		1				
27/04/2009		1	D				1		
28/04/2009	1		C	1(18)					
28/04/2009	1		C	1(18)					
28/04/2009	1		B		1				
TOTAL	47	4		4	18	12	12	5	0