



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02324

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: RECOVERY / COLLECTION OF PERSONAL PROTECTION WEAPONS

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many Personal Protection Weapons have been 'collected' from former members of the security forces since the process of recalling PPWs began?

Question 2

How many have been recalled in each year since the exercise of 'recall' began?

Answer 1 and 2

Firearms Licensing Branch have advised that there is no exercise of 'recall, collection or recovery' of personal protection weapons. All applications which involve possession of a personal protection weapon are considered in accordance with PSNI Policy Directive 09/06, implemented in 2006 which can be viewed at

http://www.psni.police.uk/policy_directive_0906_personal_protection_weapon.pdf

which outlines PSNI criteria in respect of PPW applications for grant or further grant of a firearm certificate. If an application does not fulfil the criteria as outlined in the aforementioned policy and the application for a grant or further grant is subsequently refused, the applicant/holder will be required to dispose of the PPW using a legitimate method of disposal applicable to the circumstances e.g. by returning it to PSNI (for on loan PSNI weapons only), applying to the NIO Purchase Scheme, selling it to a licensed firearms dealer, surrendering it to police for destruction or transferring it to another person who has been issued with a firearm certificate to authorise possession of the firearm in question.

Question 3

How many PPWs are estimated currently to be in the possession of former members of the security forces?

Answer

Records indicate that there are currently 2030 ex security force members issued with firearm certificates to authorise possession of a personal protection weapon (PPW).

Question 4, 5 & 6

Has a 'volume' target been set within the PSNI for the recovery/collection of PPWs since the process began?

Has this target been met in each year?

What is the target collection volume currently?

Answer

There is no exercise of 'recall, collection or recovery' of personal protection weapons. All applications which involve possession of a personal protection weapon are considered in accordance with PSNI Policy Directive 09/06, implemented in 2006, which outlines PSNI criteria in respect of PPW applications for grant or further grant of a firearm certificate. A 'volume' target does not exist.

Question 7

How many PPWs have been collected in the current year?

Answer

Firearms Licensing Branch have advised 28 weapons have been returned to the PSNI to date in 2009.

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 @ <http://www.psnipolice.uk/>

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