



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2009-02595

Keyword: Road Policing

Subject: ROAD DEATH INVESTIGATION & COLLISION RECORDING

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Please provide me with a copy of your force policies on Road Death Investigation and Collision Recording. I am particularly interested in the element of the policy that deals with Police Collisions at work and Collisions that are considered "on duty".

Answer

The Police Service of Northern Ireland has decided to exempt part of the information requested under Section 21 - Information Reasonably Accessible by Other Means. The information requested can be obtained by using the attached link which contains the Road Traffic Investigations Manual used by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and supplied by the Association of Chief Police Officers of England Wales and Northern Ireland (ACPO).

http://www.acpo.police.uk/asp/policies/Data/road_death_investigation_manual_18x12x07.pdf

The Road Death Investigation Manual makes no specific reference to "police collisions" nor does it define same. The death of a police officer due to a Road Traffic Collision is treated in exactly the same manner as a death of a member of the public. However, we do have a specific guidance relating to collisions involving police vehicles, which I have attached above (2522.pdf). As defined in the RUC Pensions Regulations, an injury is treated as an injury on duty if the member concerned received the injury while on duty or while on a journey necessary to enable him to report for duty or return home after duty. Consequently a collision involving a police officer on his/her way to or from work is considered and treated as an "on duty" collision for pay purposes, though the investigative process applied is the same as for any member of the public involved in a similar collision. In these circumstances the instructions relating to collisions involving police vehicles do not apply.

Question 2

Please provide me with a copy of officers overtime claims for dealing with collisions whilst off duty during the last five years.

Answer

This information is not held centrally within the Police Service of Northern Ireland and figures for officers in each of our eight Districts would firstly have to be collated. In addition, the accuracy of the information would depend upon the record holders being able to determine the exact reasons for overtime and I have been advised that the current overtime recording system does not contain a category for recording overtime whilst dealing with a RTC whilst off duty. The only means of collecting this information would be to individually examine each officers overtime claim form (F40) and manually retrieve the data. One District alone has advised that based upon an estimate of 25 seconds per form to examine 800 officers' forms over 60 months, the total time required to accede to this particular question is likely to be approximately 200 hours.

The cost of complying with this question would 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).

The Police Service of Northern Ireland have also considered whether we can be of any assistance in terms of helping you refine your request to bring it under the cost limit however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

Question 3

Please provide me with the number of collisions recorded as a Police Collision whilst the officer was off duty in the last five years.

Answer

Searches were conducted which failed to locate any records or documents in relation to your request and based on the information you have provided. Accordingly, I have determined that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold the information to which you seek access.

An officer is not permitted to drive a police vehicle whilst off duty. The data requested is not captured, as an RTC involving an off duty police officer is recorded in the same manner as an RTC involving a civilian.

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 @ www.psni.police.uk

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

APPENDIX 'A'

COLLISIONS INVOLVING POLICE VEHICLES – SERVICE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- (1) This General Order will take effect from 6 September 2004.
- (2) Where a police vehicle is involved in a collision as defined in paragraphs 2, 3 or 4 below, the case will be investigated and reported in accordance with Annex 1 to this General Order. This includes the driving of a police vehicle either by a police officer or civilian staff member.
- (3) In addition to public roads and places, this policy will apply equally in private roads and places.

2. SLIGHT CONTACT

Slight Contact is defined as damage to an individual police vehicle only, where the amount of damage is negligible, and the damage sustained was not in any way due to the manner in which the police vehicle or any other vehicle was being driven. Negligible would include for example, a broken wing mirror, damage to a bumper as a result of a parking manoeuvre, a broken lens, a dent or scrape in one panel of bodywork, a stone chip or broken window caused by debris thrown up by an unidentified passing vehicle, etc.

3. MINOR COLLISION

A Minor Collision will be defined as a collision involving a police vehicle where there is:

- (1) damage to that vehicle which is more than slight contact; or
- (2) damage to any other vehicle; or
- (3) damage to any property;

and the damage sustained was not in any way due to the manner in which the police vehicle or any other vehicle was being driven.

4. MAJOR COLLISION

A Major Collision will be defined as a collision involving a police vehicle where there is:

- (1) a fatality; or
- (2) injury to any person; or
- (3) any damage sustained which may have been due to the manner in which the police vehicle or any other vehicle was being driven; or
- (4) an allegation made that a defect on any vehicle involved was a contributory factor.