



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2010-03069

**Keyword:** Crime

**Subject:** Stolen Fuel

### Request and Answer:

I am writing to confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has now completed its search for the information.

I have today decided to:

- disclose records in relation to questions 4, 5 and 6 in full;
- fully exempt records in relation to questions 1 and 2 pursuant to the provisions of section 31 of the Act.
- Information in relation to questions 3 and 7 is not held.

### Question 1

Is it at all possible to obtain statistic for offences where MO indicates property stolen as fuel'?

If so I would ask if the following information could be broken down by quarter (October to December 2008, January to March 2009, April to June 2009, July to September 2009, July to September 2009).

Fuel (petrol, diesel, home heating oil etc) stolen from farms/agricultural businesses (county specific).

### Question 2

Fuel stolen from haulage companies (county specific).

### Answer

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption/s, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public

interest lies, are listed below:

## Section 31 (1) (a) - Law Enforcement

This is a prejudiced based, qualified exemption which means that the public authority must demonstrate the harm in disclosing the information and must also consider the balance of the public interest in releasing the information against the public interest in withholding it.

### **Harm**

To release low level statistics in relation to farms and haulage companies where burglary, robbery and theft of fuel offences have taken place within a certain time frame and in a certain policing area would be likely to assist criminals in identifying such properties which they may conclude are vulnerable to this type of theft. To reveal that a premises in a certain area has been subject to these offences in the last two years may highlight that premises as an easy target for fuel theft.

### **Public Interest Test**

#### **Factors Favouring Disclosure**

Disclosing this information may increase awareness of fuel offences in certain areas, reduce crime and lead to more information from the public. The public could use this information to take steps to prevent falling victim to this type of crime in the future.

#### **Factors Favouring Retention**

Release of the information may place individuals who live or work at these premises at risk. It is likely that more crime would be committed, a fear of crime will be realised and the prevention or detection of crime would be hindered.

### **Decision**

Disclosure of the specific breakdown (policing area and yearly quarter) of the statistics requested would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime by revealing low level statistics relating to identifiable premises at which fuel theft has occurred. This would compromise the law enforcement tactics of the PSNI and put individuals at risk. Although there are valid arguments for disclosure of the information, in this case they are outweighed by the strong public interest in the prevention of crime.

However, please see the tables below which provide total numbers of burglary, robbery and theft offences at farms and haulage companies where the property stolen was fuel.

#### **Recorded burglary, robbery and theft offences where the incident occurred at a farm.**

	Oct-Dec 2008	Jan-Mar 2009	Apr-Jun 2009	Jul-Sep 2009	Oct-Dec 2009	Jan-Mar 2010
<b>Total</b>	12	4	10	8	5	8

#### **Recorded burglary, robbery and theft offences where the incident occurred at a haulage company.**

	Oct-Dec 2008	Jan-Mar 2009	Apr-Jun 2009	Jul-Sep 2009	Oct-Dec 2009	Jan-Mar 2010
<b>Total</b>	2	3	2	2	3	1

**Question 3**

Fuel stolen from industrial premises (county specific).

**Answer**

This information is not held. We are unable to specifically identify 'industrial premises' from the relevant PSNI recording system.

**Question 4**

Home heating fuel stolen (county specific).

**Answer**

On 28<sup>th</sup> October we advised you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland's Central Statistics Unit could only provide the requested information by Policing Area and are unable to provide figures by County. You agreed to accept this information.

Please see the table attached below which shows details of recorded burglary, robbery and theft offences where property stolen was home heating fuel, broken down by quarter year from October 2008.

**Question 5**

Thefts from vehicles where the property was fuel.

**Answer**

Please see the table attached below which shows details of recorded theft from vehicle offences where property stolen was diesel or petrol, broken down by quarter year from October 2008.

**Question 6**

Making off without payment/drive off offences where the property was fuel.

**Answer**

Please see the table attached below which shows details of recorded making off without payment offences where property stolen was fuel, broken down by quarter year from October 2008.

**Question 7**

Do you how this compares with the UK?

**Answer**

This part of your request takes the form of a question, which is seeking a member of the Service to express an opinion regarding how PSNI's statistics on stolen fuel compare with the rest of the UK and as such this is not a valid request for recorded information held by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

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 letter.

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](mailto: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](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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

## Recorded burglary, robbery and theft offences where property stolen was home heating fuel

**Please Note:** These figures are based on information taken from a live crime recording system and will be subject to change.

	Oct-Dec 2008	Jan-Mar 2009	Apr-Jun 2009	Jul-Sep 2009	Oct-Dec 2009	Jan-Mar 2010
Antrim	6	12	2	1	4	16
Ards	11	15	5	1	3	8
Armagh	9	12	2	2	4	12
Banbridge	6	5	2	0	4	8
East Belfast	8	6	5	2	1	6
North Belfast	5	8	1	1	6	3
South Belfast	2	7	1	0	2	14
West Belfast	0	2	1	1	1	3
Ballymena	15	17	4	1	8	10
Ballymoney	8	15	0	1	8	6
Carrickfergus	3	12	1	1	3	3
Coleraine	13	25	10	4	8	20
Cookstown	7	11	2	1	3	6
Craigavon	13	16	10	3	6	18
Castlereagh	4	4	0	0	1	1
Down	5	16	4	3	4	14
Dungannon & South Tyrone	18	17	7	3	9	26
Fermanagh	21	11	6	0	13	17
Foyle	22	30	7	6	13	24
Larne	6	6	5	3	5	6
Limavady	13	11	3	2	6	9
Lisburn	6	9	0	2	6	5
Magherafelt	4	1	2	0	2	2
Moyle	10	13	3	0	0	5
Newtownabbey	14	12	6	1	6	7
North Down	5	7	2	0	3	8
Newry & Mourne	12	3	7	9	12	21
Omagh	11	10	3	3	8	18
Strabane	13	17	4	1	10	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>305</b>

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

## Recorded theft from vehicle offences where property stolen was diesel or petrol

**Please Note:** These figures are based on information taken from a live crime recording system and will be subject to change.

	Oct-Dec 2008	Jan-Mar 2009	Apr-Jun 2009	Jul-Sep 2009	Oct-Dec 2009	Jan-Mar 2010
Antrim	0	1	2	1	0	0
Ards	2	0	0	1	0	0
Armagh	0	0	0	0	0	3
Banbridge	0	0	0	2	0	0
East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	1
North Belfast	1	0	0	0	0	1
South Belfast	0	0	1	0	0	0
West Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymena	1	0	0	1	1	0
Ballymoney	0	2	1	0	0	0
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	1
Coleraine	0	1	0	0	0	2
Cookstown	1	1	6	0	0	0
Craigavon	2	2	1	0	0	0
Castlereagh	0	0	0	1	0	0
Down	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dungannon & South Tyrone	2	0	1	6	2	2
Fermanagh	4	5	1	1	0	4
Foyle	0	0	1	0	3	5
Larne	2	5	1	2	1	0
Limavady	0	0	1	0	0	0
Lisburn	0	0	1	0	0	1
Magherafelt	1	0	2	0	0	0
Moyle	0	0	0	1	1	1
Newtownabbey	1	0	1	0	0	1
North Down	0	0	0	0	1	0
Newry & Mourne	0	1	2	2	4	0
Omagh	1	3	0	0	0	0
Strabane	1	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22</b>

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

## Recorded making off without payment offences where property stolen was fuel

**Please Note:** These figures are based on information taken from a live crime recording system and will be subject to change.

	Oct-Dec 2008	Jan-Mar 2009	Apr-Jun 2009	Jul-Sep 2009	Oct-Dec 2009	Jan-Mar 2010
Antrim	19	9	20	15	13	23
Ards	9	22	15	24	6	12
Armagh	8	6	3	6	4	3
Banbridge	2	3	0	1	3	4
East Belfast	18	24	19	19	23	38
North Belfast	21	9	12	14	12	22
South Belfast	28	36	19	14	28	45
West Belfast	14	5	9	8	11	13
Ballymena	15	13	21	8	27	18
Ballymoney	9	5	2	2	5	4
Carrickfergus	4	3	2	4	8	10
Coleraine	11	13	9	6	8	10
Cookstown	5	4	3	3	2	2
Craigavon	19	25	28	29	9	17
Castlereagh	33	28	18	19	23	24
Down	23	19	15	23	9	29
Dungannon & South Tyrone	9	11	19	16	20	3
Fermanagh	3	8	5	11	3	7
Foyle	1	3	0	6	2	0
Larne	4	13	3	7	6	6
Limavady	0	0	1	2	2	2
Lisburn	25	30	34	29	30	63
Magherafelt	1	1	1	4	6	4
Moyle	1	0	0	1	1	0
Newtownabbey	23	22	30	29	20	32
North Down	10	19	14	20	17	13
Newry & Mourne	4	5	3	8	3	3
Omagh	7	4	1	4	0	5
Strabane	3	0	1	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>412</b>

Source: Central Statistics Unit, PSNI