



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F 2011 00634

Keyword: Crime

Subject: PSNI Forensic cleaning tender etc

Request and Answer:

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom Of Information Act 2000 around the PSNI forensic cleaning tender.

1. Is there a separate cleaning tender for forensic cleaning, or is all the cleaning grouped under one tender?
2. What was the value for forensic cleaning each year for the past 3 years?
3. When using out sourced forensic cleaners, are there separate cleaners for each district, an approved contractors list for all areas or, is the one company used for all areas and all incidents?
4. How many cases have there been in the past year where the PSNI have called upon out sourced cleaners to clean scenes of crime? Please specify; Murder, Suicide, Blood Spills, Other.
5. How would the representative of the cleaning company be contacted in the event of an incident?
6. How quickly would the cleaning team have to be at the scene to begin cleaning?
7. Are there systems in place to ensure the cleaning team meet specific criteria (Standards of Work).
8. As varying rates would be charged depending on the seriousness of the incident, how is the price for the tender calculated?
9. Please list all incidents/situations that would require the PSNI to call upon an out sourced cleaning company. i.e. Murder, Suicide, Natural Deaths, Blood spills in vehicles, Spillage of bodily fluids in vehicles or cells etc
10. Can a financial breakdown of works done and associated costs be obtained for any of the past 3 years, so a greater understanding can be gained of how to price for work in this market?
11. Would the cleaning company submit invoices per month or after each incident?

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), when refusing to provide such information (because the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit) to provide you the applicant with a notice which states that fact.

To locate and retrieve the information in relation to questions 2 and 10 alone would require contact to be made with at least three separate branches within the PSNI.

The information in relation to questions 2 and 10 is not held in an easily retrievable format. A case by case search would have to be carried out and the information collated and interpreted. In relation to question 10 which asks for a financial breakdown of works done and associated costs for any of the past 3 years, such costs would include staff costs, transport, cleaning materials etc and will be embedded into many different budgets and therefore it would be over the fees to extract. In addition it would involve creating information which we are not obliged to do under the Act. It is estimated that the cost associated within one branch to answer questions 2 and 10 would exceed 160 hours work.

This is in excess of the "appropriate costs limit" under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450 (18hours). If this cost applies to one or more questions, then it applies to the entire request.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this letter should be considered as a Refusal Notice, and the request has therefore been closed.

Submission of a refined request would be treated as a new request, and considered in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including consideration of relevant Part II exemptions.

Section 16 – Duty to provide advice and assistance

In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. Although PSNI would hold information regarding the costs, these records cover various aspects as mentioned previously and would be embedded in different budgets and systems. Therefore, due to the nature and structure of the information requested this would make it extremely difficult for the PSNI to advise you how to refine your request to a point below the £450 cost limit.

Although excess cost removes the service's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill, I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this will be helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request.

In relation to question 1, the forensic cleaning of specific items of equipment and crime scenes is currently under contract with a company. The forensic cleaning of some locations within the police estate forms part of a separate contract with a company.

If you have any queries regarding your request or this decision please do not hesitate to contact 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.

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.psnj.police.uk

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