



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-04254

Keyword: Crime

Subject: Missiles Thrown Onto Motorway

Request and Answer:

Question

Please provide details from the past three years, split into annual figures, of:

Could I clarify the time period of the request to include the calendar years 2009, 2010 and 2011 please

a) The number of reports the force has received of missiles being thrown from a motorway bridge onto traffic, or the carriageway below.

If recorded, please include the type of missile alleged to have been used in each incident, and details of the damage or injuries caused, and the number of victims.

b) The number of reports the force has received of missiles being thrown from a bridge over any other road and, if recorded, the type of missile used.

c) The number of prosecutions of individuals suspected of throwing missiles from a bridge over a motorway or other road.

d) The number of convictions of individuals who threw missiles from a bridge over a road, and the details of each case if recorded.

Answer

Section 17(5) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, 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.

It is estimated that the cost of complying with your request for information would exceed 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.

I contacted PSNI Central Statistics Branch, Information and Communication Services (ICS) and Roads Policing in an attempt to retrieve the information you have requested. Roads Policing do not

hold the information requested. Central Statistics Branch advised they had no specific way of extracting information relating to missiles being thrown off a motorway bridge. Such incidents would be included in recorded crime figures if reported to the police, but each incident would require someone to read through all incidents to single these specific cases out. In a year there are approximately 30,000 criminal damage offences and 30,000 Violence Against The Person offences. It is therefore estimated that the total required to locate, extract and collate the information requested would take an estimated 15,000 hours. ICS also advised that on their recording system any such incidents would be recorded as criminal damage/assault/suspicious circumstances in the same way as any other incident. To complete this request would therefore involve manually trawling approximately 1,295,605 incidents. Assuming 20 minutes per incident, this would also result in the 18 hour limit being exceeded with a total of 431,868 hours.

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.

You may wish to submit a refined request in order that the cost of complying with your request may be facilitated within the 'appropriate limit'. In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit however the nature and structure of the information unfortunately makes this impossible.

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.

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 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.psni.police.uk

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