



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-01259

Keyword: Organisational Information/Governance

Subject: Requests for Army to Examine Suspect Devices

Request and Answer:

Question 1

How many times last year January 1, 2010 to December 31st, 2010 did police request the army to examine suspect devices?

Question 2

How many times this year from January 1, 2011 to April 30, 2011 did police request the army to examine suspect devices?

Question 3

How many times in 2009 from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009 did police request the army to examine suspect devices?

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.

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.

Requests for Army Technical Officers or 'Direct Taskings' are dialled direct to the military by the PSNI's Belfast Regional Control or the relevant District Command Unit.

However, the number of taskings is not captured centrally within the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Incidents involving hoax calls, hoax devices or actual devices are recorded on the PSNI's Command and Control system. However, in order to determine whether Army Technical Officers were tasked to examine suspect devices, each Command and Control log of this nature would require individual examination. One District Command Unit alone has advised that with an average of 160 Command and Control entries per day, this task would take well in excess of the 18 hour cost limit. In total there are 8 District Command Units within the Service.

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.

In compliance with Section 16 of the Act, I have considered how your request may be refined to bring it under the appropriate limit. Unfortunately, the nature and structure of the information makes this impossible.

You may wish to direct your request to the Ministry of Defence using their online Freedom of Information request form which can be accessed using the link below:

<http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FreedomOfInformation/>

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.