



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-02753

Keyword: Road Policing

Subject: Safety Camera System Employed by PSNI

Request and Answer:

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

I have today decided to:

- disclose information in response to questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 and 6 in full; and
- fully exempt information in response to question 4 pursuant to the provisions of Sections 31 and 38 the Act.

Question 1

I wish to seek clarification on the range/distance of all speed detection devices (Laser, Mobile et al) used by the PSNI.

Answer

The Ultra-Lite Laser, the Laser 1000 and the LT120:20 all carry a range up to 1000 meters dependant on forward view and weather conditions. The PSNI has largely withdrawn Radar devices from operational service with the few remaining devices to be de-commissioned before the end of the year. A Radar device cannot operate beyond 500 meters.

Question 2

The duration that an officer needs to continue monitoring a vehicle to legitimately establish if that vehicle is speeding.

Answer

The training delivered by PSNI is in accordance with ACPO advice and requires officers to firstly form an opinion that a vehicle is speeding before corroborating the vehicle's speed by use of a technical device. The Laser operates by sending a pulse of light to the target vehicle and when sufficient pulses of light have been emitted and returned a reading is displayed on the device. At this point if a vehicle's speed reading is over the applicable limit, sufficient evidence has been obtained and the vehicle will be stopped. This process could take circa 5-10 seconds, dependant upon individual circumstances. However there is no stipulation in law that a vehicle must be speeding "for x

seconds”.

Question 3

The jurisdiction of the Harbour Police on the Sydenham and Queens Road and their scope for issuing fixed penalties for alleged speeding.

Answer

Searches were conducted which failed to locate any records or documents relevant to your request. Accordingly, I have determined that the PSNI do not hold the information to which you seek access. Belfast Harbour Police may be best placed to respond to this part of your request. You can contact their Freedom of Information Officer by accessing the following link <http://www.belfast-harbour.co.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information> or by writing to the address below;

Freedom of Information Officer
Belfast Harbour
Harbour Office
Corporation Square
Belfast BT1 3AL

Question 4

The margin of error allowable under the law for alleged speeding (10% is a number that I have heard frequently).

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) Law Enforcement
Section 38 (1) (a) (b) Health and Safety

Sections 31 and 38 are prejudice based and qualified exemptions, therefore a Harm Test and Public Interest Test are necessary.

Harm Test

The PSNI is charged with enforcing the law, preventing and detecting crime and protecting the communities we serve. Release of this information has the potential to increase speed on our roads. If the enforcement threshold were revealed motorists may drive to this rather than the posted speed limit. This could negatively impact on the police's ability to effectively enforce speed limits and expose drivers and pedestrians to significant risk of harm.

Public interest Test Section 31

For Release

The PSNI has a duty to effectively police Northern Ireland's roads. The public have a right to know that this is being done responsibly. Release would also lead to better understanding of the speed

detection processes used on the roads.

For Retention

Release of this information would compromise road policing tactics, place individuals at risk and may lead to more driving offences being committed.

Public Interest Test - Section 38

For Release

Disclosure would lead to better public awareness and debate with regards to roads policing.

For Retention

The release of information relating to speed detection thresholds could lead to increased danger on the roads and pose a significant risk to drivers and pedestrians. Excessive speeding is already the main cause of the vast majority of crashes which kill and seriously injure on our roads. To reveal PSNI's enforcement thresholds could deliver a message that speeds other than those posted will be tolerated and create a loss of confidence in the PSNI to protect the well being of the community.

Decision

There is always a strong interest in the accountability of the Service, however, balanced against this is the importance of public safety and the ability of the police to prevent and detect crime.

Disclosure would be likely to increase danger on our roads and place individuals at risk. Information should not be released if it is likely to endanger the safety of any individual.

It is for these reasons that the public interest must favour withholding the requested information.

Question 5

The manufacturers and models of the mobile and laser speed detection cameras and equipment used by the PSNI.

Answer

PSNI use LTI 20.20 Ultralyte 100. LTI 20-20 Ultralyte 100 and LTI 20.20 speedscope devices all manufactured by Laser technology Inc of Colorado, USA and TELE-TRAFFIC (UK) Limited. The speed detection camera equipment is the LASTEC Local Video System manufactured by Laser Technology Inc, of Colorado, USA and Tele –Traffic (UK) Ltd when used in conjunction with the LTI 20.20 Speedscope speed measuring device.

PSNI also use the Kustom Prolaser 11 speed measuring device manufactured by Kustom Signals Inc of Kansas USA however these are due to be withdrawn from service.

Question 6

Please also include consideration for the wavebands each safety camera works on (K Ku, Ka, X).

Answer

The speed detection camera equipment used by PSNI is the LASTEC Local Video System manufactured by Laser Technology Inc, of Colorado, USA and Tele –Traffic (UK) Ltd used in conjunction with the LTI 20.20 Speedscope speed measuring device. The LTI20.20 speedmeter uses infra red light as its sensing medium; it is our understanding that the radar bands you mention

are not applicable to the operation of this safety camera equipment.

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.

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.psnipolice.uk

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