



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2011-02966

Keyword: Road Policing

Subject: Speed Cameras

Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested and the answers to your questions are as follows.

Question 1

So what are these mystery criteria for camera locations?

Quote "Enforcement vehicles are exempt from parking regulations."

Again, I asked several times and was never provided with an answer.

Answer

I have been advised that Section 4, scheme rules, in the Safety Camera Handbook which can be viewed at

http://www.psni.police.uk/safety_camera_scheme_handbook.pdf

illustrates the criteria requested. With regard to your quote I have been informed that a statutory parking exemption found at Art 4(g) of the Roads (Restriction of Waiting) Order (NI) 1982, applies when: "the vehicle to be used for...police...purposes".

Question 2

What exactly is the legislation he talks of that allows camera operators to park dangerously and illegally? ie grass verges, urban clearways, pavements etc.

Answer

Please see the response to question 1 in relation to Roads (Restriction of Waiting) Order (NI) 1982.

The PSNI always seek to position the van in such a way that obstruction or inconvenience to other road users is kept to an absolute minimum.

We recognise that parking on the footpath is likely to attract adverse comment from the public and for this reason this option is reserved as a final resort when all other alternatives have been explored.

Camera operators have been issued with digital cameras so they can photograph the vehicle in position, thereby allowing police to review and respond to specific complaints. The PSNI Roads Policing Branch has advised that the PSNI welcome feedback on the **specific** “dangerous” locations mentioned in your request.

Question 3

I also raised a query asking how often these cameras are deployed on rural B-roads and on roads between the hours of 11pm and 6am. ie where and when most accidents actually occur.

Once again, I never received a response. So will an FOI request yield one?

I'll leave it at 3 questions for now so I don't get fobbed off by the queries costing too much money for you to offer a response.

Answer

Most rural B class roads are governed by the national speed limit currently set at 60mph. This 60mph is not regarded as an indication of the speed that is safe for this road; rather it should be viewed as an upper limit. In addition to this, the Safety Camera Scheme applies an additional threshold (same as PSNI) on top of this. Consequently the collisions that occur on many B class roads will not be as a result of speeding over the posted limit, but would be classified as inappropriate speed for that particular road, the prevailing conditions or indeed the capabilities of the driver.

As a result, most B class roads will not meet the 85% percentile rule as outlined in the handbook and so do not meet the criteria for Safety Camera Scheme deployment.

Cameras rely on light to allow an image to be captured and consequently the camera van cannot currently be deployed to locations where there is no ambient light such as may be provided by street lighting. I can advise that the PSNI have recently purchased a new generation of cameras and flash units which will permit night-time deployment in collision hot-spots.

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.