



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2012-02033

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Use of Taser

Request and Answer:

Question 1

Details of the number of times that a taser weapon has been used by the police force. I would like details going back to 2003, for each calendar year please.

Question 2

In each case please give as much detail as possible about:

- a) when the weapon was used
- b) what type of weapon inc voltage
- c) in what situation the weapon was used e.g. suspected robber pointing weapon at police officer and;
- d) why police were present e.g. call about suspected domestic abuse

Question 3

Please state also whether, following the use of the weapon, the person who was tasered:

- a) received medical attention and;
- b) was hospitalised

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 (18 hours).

The information requested is not easily accessible. The retrieval process would require a review of 432 taser uses, this is based on the PSNI definition of a taser 'use' which includes drawn, aimed, red dot and fired. These 432 uses are entries on the Electronic Use of Force Monitoring System each of these would have to be reviewed separately and then cross referenced against the relevant Command and Control System entries. In addition for each firing the details would have to be checked against a Home Office form Tas1, to capture all data. Conducting a manual trawl of each system would take approximately 26 hours, exceeding the 18 hour cost limit.

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 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.

For your information, Tasers were introduced to PSNI in a limited pilot on 25th January 2008. They were issued to specialist firearms officers and have also been made available to authorised firearms officers attached to Armed Response Vehicles (since 19th December 2008) who have completed ACPO approved accredited training in the use of the device.

Statistical data regarding Use of Force including Taser can be accessed via the PSNI website using the link provided below:

http://www.psni.police.uk/web_version_uof_report_to_30th_september_2011.pdf

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.