



# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2012-01067

**Keyword:** Organisational Information/Governance

**Subject:** "Use of Force" Occurrences

**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. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

**Question 1**

The data requested is for 2009, 2010 and 2011. If data is only available by financial year please provide it from 08/09, 09/10, 10/11

Questions for force data retrieval.

How many 'use of force' occurrences took place in your force area during the requested period? (Discount purely Arrest / handcuffing)?

**Question 2**

How many of those occurrences involved deployment and use of Taser?

**Question 3**

How many of those occurrences involved deployment and use of baton or physical strikes?

**Answer**

Please see the table below;

	AEP Discharged	Q3. Baton Used	CS Sprayed	Firearm Discharged	Police Dog	Q2. TASER Fired	Q1. Total
2009	14	441	367	4	53	10	<b>889</b>
2010	51	379	387	2	42	12	<b>873</b>
2011	97	222	231	2	19	8	<b>579</b>
Total	162	1042	985	8	114	30	<b>2341</b>

Statistics on the Police Use of Force are published every six months on the PSNI website. These can be accessed using the following link;

[http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates\\_statistics/updates-statistics\\_on\\_police\\_use\\_of\\_force-2.htm](http://www.psni.police.uk/index/updates/updates_statistics/updates-statistics_on_police_use_of_force-2.htm)

#### **Question 4**

How many arrests took place in your force area during the requested periods?

#### **Answer**

In 2009 there were 38,944 arrests.  
In 2010 there were 39,148 arrests.  
In 2011 there were 38,848 arrests.

#### **Question 5**

How many officers were assaulted in your force during the requested periods?

#### **Answer**

In 2009 there were 4123 Assault on Police offences.  
In 2010 there were 4226 Assault on Police offences.  
In 2011 there were 4119 Assault on Police offences

#### **Question 6**

How many members of the public made complaints or have taken civil action against your force of excessive use of force during the requested periods?

#### **Answer**

The Office of the Police Ombudsman provides an independent police complaints system under the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. The remit of this office is also to investigate Chief Constable's referrals (also those from the Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Policing Board and Public Prosecution, and matters that are believed to be in the public interest).

The Police Ombudsman's website publishes statistical information regarding complaints by category and financial year. The information sought can be retrieved by accessing the following link;  
<http://www.policeombudsman.org/modules/publications/Publications.cfm/CatID/6/action/list>

Table 9 of the Annual Statistical Bulletin 2010/11 details the number of complaints by allegation type and subtype. Although there is no complaint category for "excessive use of force" this can be included in the "oppressive behaviour" allegation type.

Information on previous years can be found using the following link;

<http://www.policeombudsman.org/modules/statistics/statistics.cfm/action/detail/section/3/district/32>

#### **Question 7**

Have any officers or staff in your force ever been investigated for allegations of excessive or inappropriate use of Taser during interactions with members of the public (please separate purely procedural issues such as hot hand over and booking out issues)?

#### **Answer**

Tasers were introduced in Northern Ireland in 2008. An agreement was reached between PSNI and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland that every time Taser was discharged, the incident would be referred by the Chief Constable for investigation by the Police Ombudsman. Therefore as in response to question 6, PONI investigates all allegations of excessive or inappropriate use of Taser. The attached link provides a detailed report on PSNI use of Taser

[http://www.policeombudsman.org/modules/press/press.cfm/press\\_ID/299/action/detail/year/2012/month/3](http://www.policeombudsman.org/modules/press/press.cfm/press_ID/299/action/detail/year/2012/month/3)

Taser report -26 Jan 2012.pdf is located at the bottom of the web page provided.

### **Question 8**

Have any officers or staff in your force ever been disciplined over allegations of excessive or inappropriate use of Taser?

### **Answer**

Since the introduction of Taser, no officer has been disciplined over allegations of excessive or inappropriate use of Taser.

### **Question 9**

Which officer do you train and equip to use Taser?

1/Firearms officer Only,

2/Firearms officers and specialist units only,

3/Firearms officer, specialist units and others (name dept i.e patrol officers).

### **Answer**

Tasers are issued to specialist firearms officers and have also been made available to authorised firearms officers attached to Road and Armed Response Vehicles. **PSNI is an armed service.**

### **Question 10**

When was Taser introduced to your force?

### **Answer**

A limited pilot scheme commenced on January 25, 2008. Tasers were introduced on December 19, 2008.

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](mailto: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](http://www.psni.police.uk)

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