



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2015-00317

**Keyword:** Operational Policing

**Subject:** PSNI Use Of Tasers

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

How many times have officers used a taser to deal with a situation?

#### Question 2

Please provide details for each incident i.e., date, location and reason.

#### Question 3

Please provide details of injuries to suspects and if they required hospital treatment

#### Question 4

How many incidents were found by the Police Ombudsman to be unlawful use of a Taser?

### 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.

I have been advised by the department concerned that to answer Question 1 i.e. in relation to 'any use of taser' would require a manual search of each form relating to any type of 'Taser Use' over the calendar years from 2008 to 2015. The PSNI policy outlines the term 'use of the Taser' include any of the following actions carried out in an operational setting:

- Drawing of a Taser in circumstances where any person perceives the action as a use of force.
- Sparking of the Taser commonly known as 'arcing'.
- Aiming of the Taser or placing the laser sight red dot onto a subject.
- Firing of a Taser so that the barbs are discharged at a subject.
- Application and discharge of a Taser in 'drive stun' and 'angled drive stun' modes to a subject.
- Discharged in any other operational circumstances, including an unintentional discharge. (This is concurrent with national practice as outlined by ACPO)

As such the PSNI since the Taser was introduced in 2008 has been 'used' 935 times each of the 'uses' relates to a use of force system entry and as such would require manual checking to access the data to be able to provide the detail you are seeking, allowing 10minutes per entry this equates to over 155 hours to recover which is over the 18 hour FOI legislation set by the Secretary of State.

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.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, if any part of the request exceeds the cost threshold then the whole request will be excess costs and there is no obligation to answer any part of the request.

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 and a response to question 1 specific to discharge of Taser could be provided within this. You may also wish to significantly reduce the time scale of the request.

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 convenience I have provided a link to the PSNI Use of Force statistics, which includes statistical information on the 'drawing' and 'discharging' of Tasers and may partially meet the needs of your request :

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

I have also provided a link to the Police Ombudsman's website, where the findings of their reports are made publically available :

<http://www.policeombudsman.org/Investigation-Reports>

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](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.