

Keeping People Safe



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2020-00375

**Keyword:** Operational Policing

**Subject:** Police Firearms Negligent Discharge for 5 Years

### Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act I can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

#### Request 1

For each of the last five years up to the date of this request, the number of incidents where there has been a negligent discharge of a police-issue firearm in your force. To be clear, by "negligent discharge" I mean any incident where a police-issue firearm has been fired when it should not have been or when it was not intended to do so.

#### Answer

The PSNI Record Owner has advised that there have been a total of 23 negligent discharges during the past 5 years.

#### Request 2

Where possible, please provide brief details of the circumstances of that discharge - i.e. description of the weapon, the location, whether during training or operational circumstances, whether it resulted in any injury.

#### Answer

Please see the information requested in the table below:

#### Accidental Discharges

Summary	Firearm	Outcome
Accidental discharge of firearm at armoury. Damage to firearms register book and table	Handgun	Superintendent's Written Warning (SWW)
Accidental discharge of firearm at home during cleaning. Damage to wall	Handgun	Advice & Guidance
Accidental discharge of firearm in office. Damage to window and wall	Handgun	SWW

Accidental discharge of firearm at home. Damage to furniture and doorframe	Handgun	SWW
Accidental discharge of firearm during cleaning. Damage to floor	Rifle	SWW
Accidental discharge of firearm at home. Damage to wall	Handgun	SWW
Accidental discharge of firearm in locker room. Injury to leg of officer	Handgun	No Further Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at loading bay. No damage caused	Handgun	SWW
Accidental discharge of firearm at home. Damage to floor	Handgun	SWW
Accidental discharge of firearm in office. Injury to finger and leg of officer	Handgun	SWW
Accidental discharge of firearm at armoury. No damage recorded	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at home during cleaning. Damage to wall	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at home during cleaning. Damage to floor	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm when cleaning at loading bay. No damage caused	Rifle	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at home. Damage to wall	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at home. Damage to wall	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at home by officer's son. Damage to floor/ceiling	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm when unloading. Damage to car boot.	Handgun	Performance Matter
Accidental discharge of firearm into kerbstone inside station complex.	Rifle	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm in station locker room. Damage to floor	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at station when unloading. Damage to floor	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm at loading bay. No damage caused	Handgun	Management Action
Accidental discharge of firearm in station locker room. Damage to locker and wall	Handgun	Management Action

### Request 3

For each of the last five years, the number of incidents where there has been a failure by a member of your force to maintain proper possession of a police-issue firearm. To be clear, by "failure to maintain proper possession" I mean any incident where a police-issue firearm has been left unattended by an officer or otherwise not been in the full possession of an officer when it should have been.

### Answer

The PSNI Record Owner has advised that there have been a total of 4 incidents during the past 5 years where police officers have failed to maintain proper possession of a police-issue firearm.

### Request 4

Where possible, please provide brief details of the circumstances of each incident of this nature - i.e. description of the weapon, location, whether during training or operational circumstances.

## Answer

Please see the table below providing the response:

### Mishandling of Firearms

Summary of Incident	Firearm	Outcome
Failure to secure firearm resulting in it being handled by non-police personnel	Handgun	SWW
Loss of firearm and rounds (later recovered)	Handgun	No Further Action
Unsecured firearm and rounds	Handgun	Management action
Firearm and rounds left unsecured in station toilets	Handgun	Written Warning

### Request 5

For questions 1 and 3, please indicate whether any incidents resulted in disciplinary action and the result of that disciplinary action.

### Answer

Please refer to the response to Request 2 in relation to the outcomes for negligent discharges incidents.

Please refer to the response to Request 4 in relation to the outcomes for incidents of failure to maintain proper possession.

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 Corporate Information Branch, 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 Corporate Information Branch, 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.