



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-02254

Keyword: Organisational Information Technology and Equipment

Subject: Use Of Recreation Software And CAD

Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates and this is being provided to you. We further consider that the information you seek in request number 2 is exempt by virtue of section 38 of FOIA and have detailed our rationale as to why this exemption applies. We have also provided you with links to guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office which we have followed in responding to your request.

Request 1

Does your department use any form of 3D recreation in relation to floor plans or crime scenes?

Answer

We are undertaking preliminary work to prepare for the use of 3D recreation products surveyed by High Definition Scanning Instruments. This is still at the training, research and developmental stage within our work streams.

Request 2

If yes, what devices/software do you use?

Answer

Whilst PSNI have confirmed in Request 1 that we are undertaking preliminary work for the use of 3D recreation products, to identify the relevant device/software will highlight the supplier, consequently we are withholding this and the rationale for this is detailed under.

Section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Police Service of Northern Ireland, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states that fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if not otherwise apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption/s, as well as the factors the Department considered when deciding where the public interest lies, are listed below:

Section 38 (1)(b) – Health & Safety – Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

The full text of exemptions can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk and further guidance on how they operate can be located on the Information Commissioners Office website www.ico.org.uk.

Section 38 is a prejudiced based, qualified exemption which means the PSNI must demonstrate harm in disclosure and consider the balance of the public interest in releasing the information.

Harm

Release of information under FOI is considered a release to the world in general, not just to the individual requesting the information. Disclosure of supplier names into the public domain would likely place the business and employees at risk of attack by those seeking to deprive PSNI of essential services or supplies.

Public Interest Test

Factors Favouring Release - Section 38

Releasing the information would promote openness and transparency. There is always a strong public interest in information that relates to the use of public funds and the procurement of services and suppliers.

Factors Favouring Retention - Section 38

Releasing the name some of any PSNI supplier into the public domain may assist terrorist groups or criminal elements to carry out attacks on these businesses or members of staff.

Terrorist activity is a real and current threat and the PSNI has a duty of care to protect individuals working for the Service. The PSNI will not disclose any information which may increase the risk of harm to any individual providing a service to the PSNI. To highlight any supplier names could endanger their employees.

Decision

Once information is disclosed by FOI there is no control or limits as to who or how the information is shared with other individuals, therefore a release under FOI is considered a release to the world in general, not just to the individual requesting the information.

Whilst accountability surrounding the use of public funds is always a strong argument in favour of releasing information, the balance will always favour retention where there is a significant risk to the safety of individuals.

Request 3

Is the 3D recreation software you use sufficient for its purpose within your department?

Answer

This request is asking PSNI to express opinion as opposed to a request for 'recorded information' under the FOI Act. However PSNI can advise that as training and research has not been undertaken we have not reached an informed position.

Request 4

Does your department use any form of CAD in relation to 2D floor plans or crime scenes?

Answer

Yes, a range of AutoCad products are used for 2D work.

Request 5

If your department does not use any form of CAD or 3D recreational software why is this?

Answer

This request is asking PSNI to express opinion as opposed to a request for 'recorded information' under the FOI Act. However PSNI can advise that we are not at present providing finished product in 3D. Until recently displaying 3D in courts would have caused some difficulty as the digital infrastructure of many NI Courtrooms offer challenges to present this technology evidentially. However with the development of 3D Laser Scanning and the new HDS instruments we will, in conjunction with the courts service, be able to provide 3D products in the future to NI Courts.

Request 6

On average how many cases are each of these methods used per year:

- a. CAD
- b. 3D recreation software

Answer

- a. CAD - 300-500
- b. 3D recreation software - None as yet

Request 7

Typically what crime types are each method used for?

- a. CAD
- b. 3D recreation software

Answer

- a. CAD - Serious Crime and Fatal Road Traffic Collision (RTC)
- b. 3D recreation software - None as yet

Request 8

Are there any qualifying criteria for these methods to be used? (CAD, 3D recreation software)

Answer

At present all the Serious Crime Investigation and RTC Survey is prepared in CAD.

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 Corporate Information Manager, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If you remain unhappy about how your request has been handled you have the right to apply in writing to the Information Commissioner at 'Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. There are a number of other platforms you can use to contact the ICO and these can be found on the ICO's website at the following link: [Make a complaint | ICO \(https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/\)](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/).

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 their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psnj.police.uk

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