

East Coast Main Line Company Limited  
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[www.eastcoast.co.uk](http://www.eastcoast.co.uk)

Barbara Whittles  
[request-101472-ff2c92a4@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-101472-ff2c92a4@whatdotheyknow.com)

3 February 2012

Dear Ms. Whittles

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

I am writing in response to your FOI request, dated 23 January 2012, concerning the use of coded announcements on East Coast trains and at stations used by East Coast.

For ease of reference, I have listed each question you asked below and detailed our response immediately below each question. The questions and responses cover both for trains and stations:

1. Are coded message announcements via the Public Address system in use at stations used by your company or on East Coast trains?

*Coded message announcements are not used at the stations we manage but are in use at some of the stations our trains call at but where we do not operate/manage the station. We do use coded messages on-board East Coast trains.*

2. How many coded messages do you have?

*East Coast has four coded messages, used solely on-board our trains.*

3. What are the circumstances in which each coded message announcement is played? And in each case state whether the announcement is instigated by staff or by other means (e.g. a fire alarm or motion detector).

*In each case the coded announcement is made and instigated by staff. The use of these codes is solely for safety or security purposes to enable the right staff to attend to an incident promptly, with the appropriate equipment where necessary, and to prevent panic and distress for passengers.*

*While I am able to confirm the circumstances for a code being used, that being following a safety or security incident occurring, and so have fulfilled the request, I am not able to disclose what the four specific*

*instances are. If this information was publicised there will be a greater risk of panic and distress for passengers when these codes are used in future and it may also impact on our ability to deal with the incidents efficiently and without delay. Under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) "the Act" there is an exemption if such disclosure would endanger the physical health or safety of any individual (Section 38 (1)). As disclosure may potentially endanger the physical health and safety of passengers and staff on-board our trains, this exemption applies.*

*East Coast has applied the public interest test. It has recognised that there is a public interest in general in public authorities being as transparent as possible. However, it has also considered the need for public authorities to safeguard the safety and security of passengers and staff.*

*East Coast has decided that the public interest test in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. The risk to safety and security is significant and outweighs the benefit to the public from disclosure. Therefore, taking into account all of the circumstances, East Coast believes that the public interest is served by applying the exemption in section 38(1) of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) to the withheld information.*

4. Confirm whether you retain a record of these coded message announcements being activated/broadcast (e.g. if I asked how many were broadcast in October 2011, would you be able to provide the information)?

*We can confirm that we do not retain records of when the coded message announcements are used.*

I hope this is helpful to you. If you are not satisfied with the response, you have the right to ask for a review. In the first instance you should contact me again to request this. If you choose to exercise that right, and are not satisfied with the outcome of the review, you have the right to complain to the information Commissioner by contacting:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Telephone 08456 30 60 60 or 01625 54 57 45  
Website [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely,



For and on behalf of East Coast Main Line Company Limited