

10th March 2010

Mr Robert Whittaker

Email: request-28692-d8e54bea@whatdotheyknow.com

Royal Mail Group

Freedom of Information Unit
2nd Floor
Royal Mail Sheffield
Pond Street
Sheffield
S98 6HR

foi@royalmail.com
www.royalmail.com

Dear Mr. Whittaker

Re: Freedom of Information Request

I am writing in response to your request for information dated 10th February 2010. We have considered your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I will answer each of your questions below, in the order that they appeared in your email:

1. Please provide details of this database, including the software / version / format used and a description of each of the fields of information stored for each box. Where codes are used to store information, I would like the specification for / meaning of these codes.

The Final Plate Database is a Microsoft Access database and contains the following fields:

- Box Number
- FC (final collection)
- Postbox type
- Location 1
- Location 2
- Postcode
- M-F time
- Sat time
- Later Outward (postcode for latest collection point)
- Later Box Number
- Base Code

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2. Could you explain the allowable formats of the box number: I believe that the first half is a postal district and the second part is a 1-4 digit number. Is it possible for the number to begin with a zero digit? Are any alphabetical suffixes ever added to the end of the number (for instance to distinguish two neighbouring boxes)?

On the Time plate, the box number consists of the outward postcode (SN11) & actual box number which can have up to 4 digits. The box numbers never start with '0' and there is never an alphabetical suffix. The box number will distinguish boxes which may have the same address.

3. I'm sure you would be interested in correcting some of these problems, so could you please provide the contact details for the person who manages the database.

4. Some boxes also have missing plates, or out-of-date plates containing an old style reference number (eg "TWR 012"). To whom should these issues be reported?

The Final Plate Database is maintained by the Final Plate Manager whose work address is provided below.

Final Plate Manager
AT20
Rowland Hill House
Boythorpe Road
CHESTERFIELD
S49 1HQ

Please note however that we would ask customers and members of the public with any queries or concerns about postboxes, collections or any aspect of Royal Mail services to contact Royal Mail Customer Services using the details below:

Telephone: 08457 740 740

8am – 6.00pm, Monday to Friday,
8am – 1.00pm on Saturdays

Textphone: 08456000606, International callers: +44 1752387112

Writing: General Enquires: FREEPOST, 20 Turner Road, St Rollox Business & Retail Park, GLASGOW, G21 1AA

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5. I would like to know what local information on post-boxes and their locations is likely to be held by local offices, in what form it is likely to be held (eg computer database, paper records), and how those offices are organised (eg by postal district).

Information held at local level will vary according to the particular requirements in that area. Local Collections teams are organised by location across the whole of the UK and can be identified by the postcodes which they are responsible for.

Limited personnel at local Royal Mail offices have access to a central collections management database. This contains information not limited to:

- Collection Points
- Collection Times
- Route Numbers
- Nearest Boxes
- Access Specification
- Type of Box
- Type of Plate
- Position of Box on an electronic map

On top of this, individual offices may have spreadsheets generated from the database with additional local information added information for operational purposes. Local spreadsheets may include the postcode of individual boxes where there is an operational need for the information.

I hope that the information provided above is helpful to you. If for any reason you are not satisfied with this response, you do have the right to request a review. If you wish to do so please set out in writing your grounds of appeal and send to the Head of Information Compliance, Royal Mail Group, Company Secretary's Office, 100 Victoria Embankment, LONDON, EC4Y 0HQ. An internal panel will then review the decision, and you will be advised of the outcome.

If, having requested an internal review by Royal Mail, you are still not satisfied with our response you also have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

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Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours Sincerely

Daniel Tulp
Freedom of Information Officer
foi@royalmail.com