



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Defence Infrastructure Organisation

DIO Sec-Sec PBF01

Mr F Dawson

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Ref. 18-10-2011-171421-021

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3 November 2011

Dear Mr Dawson

Request for Information: Radium Contamination

Thank you for your enquiry dated 18 October 2011. This was passed to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), the Ministry of Defence (MOD) body responsible for managing the defence estate and has been dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations (2004).

You asked for a list of defence sites in the UK and overseas that have been or might have been contaminated with radium, that have been disposed of since 1945. You also asked for the details of radium disposal by burial, amount of radioactivity, location and date since 1945.

I can confirm that the MOD holds some information that falls within scope of your request, but this is not collated centrally.

The MOD has developed and populated a Land Quality Assessment (LQA) database that is administered and managed by the DIO. This database holds electronic copies of all known LQA reports, however the database search capability lacks the ability to provide results that could answer your question. The MOD wants to be as open as possible in answering requests, and to help people obtain the information they are looking for. Unfortunately, to manually search through over 5000 reports to identify sites that could mention radium, would involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the authority's other work.

This could mean that we might have to refuse the request under the exceptions in the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 covering requests that are manifestly unreasonable.

However, to help, you may wish to narrow down your request to focus more precisely on the information you are seeking. You could, for example:

- shorten the time period you are interested in;
- specify exact sites you are interested in;

- browse through the material that has already been made publicly available on the authority's website www.mod.uk/dio and see if this would help you to identify more precise questions that we might be able to answer at less cost.

The DIO has however, previously provided Poyry Energy Limited with details of sites where soil contaminated with radium has been identified, as part of the update to the 2010 UK Radioactive Waste Inventory and specifically Waste Stream 7S01.

The sites in question, some of which have subsequently undergone remediation, are:

- Stirling Lines, Hereford.
- RAF Shawbury.
- RAF Kinloss.
- RAF Henlow.
- RAF Little Rissington.
- RAF Newton.
- RAF Machrohanish.
- RS Anthon.
- HMS Daedalus.
- Stirling Forthside.
- Former DARA Almondbank and Fleetlands.
- Former RNAS Donibristle (Dalgety Bay).

Please be advised that some of the sites listed above are current MOD sites, and this list differs slightly to that released for a previous FOI request in 2010. This is because the list was not finalised until November 2010.

With regards to overseas sites, it is known that radium was present on Christmas Island primarily in the form of luminised dials associated with former military vehicles and equipment.

If you would like to advise us which sites, if any, you are specifically interested in, we can check whether an LQA report exists, and if it does, provide you with a copy accordingly. The LQA reports are the primary reference point the MOD has with regards to radium disposal by on site burial.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Head of Corporate Information, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, www.ico.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

DE Sec-Sec PBFOI