

Karen Rollins  
[request-271362-1fcb21ax@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx](mailto:request-271362-1fcb21ax@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx)

26 June 2015  
Reference: F0002361

Dear Ms Rollins

I am writing in respect of your recent request of 1 June 2015 for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Having considered your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), we are able to provide the information below.

*1. How often do commercial pilots undergo mental and physical assessments?*

All pilots who hold a commercial licence undergo an annual Class 1 medical assessment with an Aeromedical Examiner, increasing to every six months from the age of 60, or 40 if they are undertaking single pilot operations. The assessment is carried out in accordance with European legislation and the requirements of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). A pilot who is assessed as 'fit' is issued with a Class 1 medical certificate.

*1a. Are these compulsory?*

A valid Class 1 medical certificate is legally required in order to exercise the privileges of a commercial licence.

*1b. What happens if a pilot does not attend despite requests?*

It is the pilot's responsibility to ensure that they hold a valid medical certificate appropriate to the licence that they hold. The aircraft operator/airline is also required to ensure that all pilots flying their aircraft hold a valid licence and medical certificate.

*2. How often do commercial pilots undergo drug / alcohol tests?*

There is no regulatory requirement for pilots to undergo periodic drug or alcohol tests. Operators are required to have drug and alcohol policies, which may include requirements for testing, but the results of such testing would be held by the airline, not the CAA.

**Civil Aviation Authority**

Aviation House Gatwick Airport South Gatwick RH6 0YR [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)  
Telephone 01293 768512 [foi.rexxxxxx@xxx.xx.xx](mailto:foi.rexxxxxx@xxx.xx.xx)

*3. How many commercial pilots failed drug / alcohol tests between 2010 and 2015? Please provide a breakdown of gender and which airline the pilot worked for*

Operators would hold the results of any drugs or alcohol tests undertaken on their pilots. The CAA runs a clinic where pilots who may have a potential drug or alcohol issue, or are known to have had an alcohol or drug problem in the past, are assessed. Pilots either refer themselves, or are identified by a number of means. A few pilots have been referred after being found to be over the alcohol limit for an aviation worker, having been tested by the police. This is a relatively rare referral route.

*4. How many pilots have been suspended between 2010 and up to present because of failed drug / alcohol tests?*

We have attempted to provide data in relation to pilots that have attended the CAA's clinic, which as explained above pilots can be referred to for a number of reasons, not just a failed test. However, the data is held on a number of different databases and, once retrieved, requires a manual check by either validating with other reports, or reviewing individual case files, to validate the accuracy of the data and to establish whether each pilot has been assessed as 'unfit' during the time period.

We have spent approximately 20 hours trying to retrieve this data and as yet have not been able to extract the information. Under Section 12 of the FOIA, a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit, which for the CAA is £450.

Costs are calculated at £25 per hour and apply to the following activities:

- (a) determining whether the information is held;
- (b) locating the information, or a document which may contain the information;
- (c) retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information, and
- (d) extracting the information from a document containing it.

As the cost has already exceed the appropriate limit, and have not yet succeeded in retrieving the information requested, the CAA is not obliged to comply with this part of your request (a copy of this section of the FOIA can be found below).

*5. Do you plan to follow the FAA and begin consulting medical professionals and pilots to come up with new rules regarding mental and emotional evaluations of pilots?*

The CAA is working with EASA to determine whether there should be any changes to the medical requirements for pilots or operational requirements for airlines, particularly in the area of mental and psychological health. The CAA is holding a mental health working group in conjunction with the Department for Transport (DfT) to determine whether any changes should be made to guidance on mental health assessments of pilots.

*6. Are you reviewing cockpit security procedures following the tragic Germanwings plane crash?*

Lessons for flight deck security which may lie in the tragic loss of Germanwings flight 9525 are being considered very actively by the global aviation community, including through the International Civil Aviation Organisation, and the CAA and the DfT are closely involved in this work. With the CAA in support, DfT is also represented on the relevant EU regulatory forum for aviation security; and the CAA is a member of the task force established by EASA to look at possible lessons from the loss of the Germanwings flight. The French air accident investigation agency, when it published in May its interim report on that loss, said that its further work would include a focus on flight deck door locking systems, and cockpit access

and exit procedures. The CAA and DfT will be paying close attention to the agency's final report, which will naturally be an important input to the discussions. In the meantime, the CAA has recommended to UK aircraft operators that they re-assess the safety and security risks associated with flight crew members leaving the flight crew compartment in flight due to operational or physiological needs.

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

Caroline Chalk  
Head of External Information Services  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Aviation House  
Gatwick Airport South  
Gatwick  
RH6 0YR

[caroline.chalk@caa.co.uk](mailto:caroline.chalk@caa.co.uk)

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with Freedom of Information requests. The key steps in this process are set in the attachment.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the FOIA to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office  
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
SK9 5AF

[www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx)

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at <http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=286&pagetype=65&appid=24>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Stevens'.

Mark Stevens  
External Response Manager

**CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.

## **Freedom of Information Act : Section 12**

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) "the appropriate limit" means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority-

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,

the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.