



Mr Tom Henson
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Website: www.dft.gov.uk/mca/
Our Reference: ID3201
21/12/2018

Freedom of Information Act Request – ID3201

Dear Mr Henson,

Thank you for your email of 27/11/2018 where you requested information about blue light driver training, the exemptions HMCG blue light drivers use, and the number of road traffic incidents involving an HMCG vehicle driving under blue lights in 2017 including the outcome.

The information you requested is as follows and as enclosed:

Background:

HM Coastguard has a liveried fleet of 'blue light' response vehicles which support emergency response on the Coast and inland.

These Coastguard Rescue Vehicles are equipped to support Search and Rescue operations. They are equipped to allow the provision of casualty care (first aid, rescue stretchers), searches and water safety/rescue. Where required these vehicles are also equipped with rope rescue and mud rescue equipment.

FOi Question

- 1. What blue light driver training do your volunteers undertake? If it is not a recognised course, please provide syllabus.**
- 2. What blue light driver training do your sector managers/paid staff undertake?**
- 3. What exemptions are your blue light drivers allowed to claim?**
- 4. The number of road traffic incidents involved a coastguard vehicle driving on blue lights in 2017 and the outcome (driver at fault, third party at fault, 50/50 blame etc)**

Response 1 & 2

There is no single document which covers the parameters above but a number of documents which work together to manage the safe system of work. The following attached documents are primary elements of this system. Copies supplied of:

- Operational Use of CG Response Vehicles,
- CRS driving policy
- Emergency Driving Techniques

Coastal Operations the section of HM Coastguard responsible for Emergency Response on the Coast has 110 staff and circa 3200 volunteer rescue officers in the UK.

All staff required to drive blue light response vehicles are trained (circa 100). Operation of the Coastal Rescue vehicles is a key component of Coastal Response therefore a high proportion of our volunteers are trained to operate our vehicles.

- Volunteers must be signed off to drive Response vehicles.
- Vehicle drivers have annual driving licence checks
- Individuals are trained in 4 distinct areas of driving: On road, Off road, trailer and Response driving.
- Training covers safe working procedures, use of warning devices, safe driving techniques, driver behaviour, assessment of hazard and risk. This training is delivered to our volunteers by full time officers. Training is delivered locally in the area of operational response.
- This training is delivered using theory sessions, training videos and practical sessions.
- Procedures and Training also includes supporting elements including: vehicle loading, severe weather.
- Individuals have to declare any accidents or driving offences.
- Competence is monitored, and refresher training provided if required.
- Poor driving behaviour can be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Response 3

HM Coastguard vehicles do not take exemptions in law e.g. speed, they drive within the Highway code but use emergency warning devices to warn other road users and to assist progression through traffic.

Response 4

Four road traffic incidents involving a coastguard vehicle driving on blue lights during 2017.

- 3 road traffic incidents with Coastguard driver at fault. 1 involved a third party and the other 2 no third-party involvement.
- 1 road traffic incident with the third party at fault.

If you are unhappy with the way the Agency has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the FOIA Unit at:

The FOIA Unit
 Maritime & Coastguard Agency,
 Bay 3/08, Spring Place,
 105, Commercial Rd,
 SOUTHAMPTON,
 Hampshire.
 SO15 1EG.
 E-mail: InformationAssurance@mcga.gov.uk
 Tel: 023 80 839 649

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

In the event that you are not satisfied with the decision resulting from our internal review you can apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision notice. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

If you wish to discuss any of the above, please contact me.

Please remember to quote the reference number above with the subject line FOIA Comment/Complaint in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andy Cooper BACS Hons.