



**Hampshire  
& Isle of Wight**  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

**Information Compliance Team**

Headquarters  
Leigh Road  
Eastleigh  
Hampshire  
SO50 9SJ

Sent by email to:

J Hoppin

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**t.** 02380 626850  
**e.** DP@hantsfire.gov.uk  
**w.** hantsfire.gov.uk

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Date: 30 March 2023

Our Reference: FOI 146 22-23

Enquiries to: Information Compliance Officer

**Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Dear J Hoppin

We are writing in respect of your application for the release of information held by the Service, which we received on 3 March 2023. We can confirm that we have now completed our search for the information requested.

***You asked:***

*Please could you provide me with your "national" fire code.*

**Our answer:**

We can confirm that we hold the information requested, however we are refusing to release it as outlined below.

**National Security**

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) holds a National Fire Code that represents our Service, its vehicles and personnel. However, this information is exempt under section 24(1) National Security of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 24(1) provides that information is exempt from Section 1(1)(b) if it is required for the purposes of safeguarding national security.

The national security exemption is based on the effect the disclosure would have, not on the content or source of the information.

As you may be aware, disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is a release to the public at large. While we are not questioning the motives of the applicant, releasing this information would enable criminals and terrorists to impersonate fire service personnel and vehicles more successfully. This would in turn assist in the commission of terrorist attacks and criminal activity within our area. Supporting this via the disclosure of the information would be to the detriment of providing an efficient emergency service and a failure in our duty of care to all members of the public.

### **Public Interest Test**

For this exemption to apply, the public interest in maintaining these exemptions must outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **Public Interest in Disclosure**

There are several reasons in favour of disclosure to the public at large as follows:

- it promotes transparency, showing that we provide information to the public on request.
- it shows we have a way to identify vehicles belonging to individual services around the country easily.
- it would assist members of the public to identify legitimate fire service personnel and appliances.

### **Public Interest Against Disclosure**

The release of this information would be likely to:

- enable persons to pose as fire service officers and exploit individuals under the cover of assumed authority to their detriment. E.g., posing as a firefighter to gain access to a home to commit theft or fraud.
- be used to facilitate terrorist attacks and criminal activities in our area.
- endanger the safety of the public, leading to an increased loss of life.
- make it harder for our appliances and crews to attend incidents at important sites while additional security checks were run, preventing us from undertaking firefighting activities.

### **Conclusion**

Public safety and the ability to deliver an effective response to emergencies are of paramount importance to HIWFRS. Disclosing this information would be likely to increase the risk of criminal/terrorist activities and would endanger the health and safety of the public. Therefore, we believe that the balance of public interest favours not disclosing this information.

Any future correspondence with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service in relation to this matter should be sent to the Information Compliance Officer at the above address.

If for whatever reason you are unhappy with our response you may request an internal review by contacting [DP@hantsfire.gov.uk](mailto:DP@hantsfire.gov.uk) or by writing to the Data Protection Officer at the above address.

Should you remain dissatisfied you can appeal against the internal review decision by contacting the Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Information Compliance Officer  
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service