

Sent by Email:

To: Mr Joe Conway

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Our Ref: FOI 328 19-20

Date: 20th May 2020

Your Reference: Incident Statistics

Enquiries to: Information Compliance Officer

Dear Mr Conway,

Freedom of Information Act 2000

We are writing in respect of your recent application for the release of information held by the Authority.

You asked:

“Please could you supply details of incidents which attract Date, time, appliances, specialist appliances, officers and callsigns, Incident end time, The number of Personnel on the Vehicles, Stations type of incident, location, type of premises i.e. hospital, outcome i.e. fire or secondary fire.
From January 1st to 31st December 2016-2019”

In response to our correspondence you clarified you would like:

“1. The time the incident was reported and the time the stop call was received. 2. The Number of Personnel that was on the vehicle would be fine 3. What station was called to the incident and What type of incident it was 4. If the town isn't included just put the Area it was in 5. If possible can the Callsigns of the vehicles that was called to the scene of the incident be put on the Request”

Our answer:

Please see attached spreadsheet containing data requested. We can confirm as per Section 1 Freedom of Information Act 2000 that we hold data in relation to the callsigns of fire officers and

appliances that attended the incidents. Please note that the information relating to call signs is being withheld under Section 24(1) (National Security) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The National Security exemption is based on the effect the release of the information would have and not on the information itself. As you may be aware, disclosure under the Act is considered to be a release of information not only to you, but to the public at large. Call signs are used to identify and direct Officers and vehicles at emergency incidents and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) considers that, in the wrong hands, these could be misused to impersonate an Officer and impede or interfere with the emergency response. Fire and Rescue Services are part of the Critical National Infrastructure and, therefore, HFRS has a duty to protect its assets and provide appropriate security to ensure resilience and be able to deploy resources accordingly.

When applying this exemption HFRS must consider whether the public interest favours disclosing or withholding the information.

There is strong public interest in transparency, allowing the public to know how many vehicles we have and providing reassurance regarding the level of capability in Hampshire, preventing potential danger to the public. By providing a list of appliances attending the identified incidents the Service believes it has met this public interest.

The strongest reason favouring non-disclosure is the need to ensure that national security is not placed at risk by enabling those with criminal intent the opportunity to gain an operational advantage over the Fire and Rescue Service. Disclosing details of the call signs of vehicles would undoubtedly compromise both local and national security and undermine law enforcement and public safety processes.

You will appreciate that HFRS must ensure that information relating to the strategic movement of our emergency response vehicles is appropriately protected and, therefore, HFRS has concluded that on balance, there is a much stronger public interest in withholding this information.

Where incidents had multiple appliances (vehicles) attend, they have been listed multiple times to account for each appliance. We have provided a Unique Reference Number (URN) to assist you with identifying the same incidents.

Within the dataset it occasionally states 'unknown' under the headings of 'Appliance' and 'Station Attended'. Some of our data recording has not been consistent over the past 4 years and therefore there have been data quality issues. Where 'unknown' is listed; the callsign has not been recorded and we have been unable to identify the station or appliance that attended the incident. Where an 'Appliance' and 'Station Attended' is listed as 'Personnel'; this is where personnel from our specialist teams or a Fire Officer has attended in their assigned vehicle.

You will also note that in the 'Number of Crew' column, some contain a count of '0'. On each appliance there is a Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) that is used to record the number of crew on board and also to identify who is on board. Occasionally, there may be a fault with MDT or there could be human error and therefore the number of crew has not been recorded, which therefore leads to a count of '0'.

In relation to the incident location, as explained in our previous correspondence, the town is not always recorded on the incident recording system for every incident.

Any future correspondence with HFRS 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 or by writing to the Governance and Compliance Team at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Leigh Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9SJ.

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

Tiffany Hoole
Governance and Compliance Team