



**Scottish
Ambulance
Service**
Taking Care to the Patient



Chair
Chief
Executive

David Garbutt QPM
Pauline Howie OBE

Our ref: FOI/1125/18

21 February 2018

Dear M Creed,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your email of 05 January 2018 requesting information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 which has now been processed.

Detail

You asked for the following information:-

I would like to know in an emergency front-line ambulance,

- 1) the reported decibels and vibration levels within the transporting ambulances rear and cab compartments.
- 2) If these are not recorded how is the estimated noise level recorded?
- 3) I would also like to know the steps taken to prevent hearing damage to staff, patients and paramedic students.
- 4) How exposure times are monitored for staff and paramedic students.
- 5) How the noise and vibration levels are monitored both initially and as vehicles age and in what conditions they are tested (I.e is the noise and vibration levels tested in a moving vehicle with all necessary front line ambulance equipment including stretcher?).
- 6) Also can you please advise the model and makes of vehicle tested for front-line transportation of patients.

Response

1) The reported decibels and vibration levels within the transporting ambulances rear and cab compartments.

Current Variant (Mercedes Sprinter):

Noise tested (ISO 1999:1990- all seats and trolley cot) with all siren pitches with vehicle stationary, and then at 56mph. LAeq <70db.

Vibration Exposure Action Values (EVAs) on certain road surfaces exceeded however Exposure Limit Values (EVLs) **not** exceeded (rated at 8hrs continuous exposure) in vehicle tested on Ambulance Testing Circuit (to allow comparison between vehicles). Measurements taken and recorded in accordance with ISO 5349-2 (HAV) and ISO 2631-1 (WBV).

2) If these are not recorded how is the estimated noise level recorded?

Vehicles historically subject to non-measured (subjective) review by independent testing authority (as part of whole vehicle assessment to ensure build overall meets Vehicle Type Approval.

3) I would also like to know the steps taken to prevent hearing damage to staff, patients and paramedic students.

The Service tender document stipulates: *The noise levels in the rear body of the vehicle shall fully comply with all current and expected future legislation / The maximum Vibration levels must be included in the tender response.*

Vehicles undergo eight weekly safety checks and defects can be reported by crew to workshops. Defects may include noticeable changes to noise or vibration experienced by crew or patients.

4) How exposure times are monitored for staff and paramedic students.

Official tests must show that noise and vibration remains within acceptable levels, even when the vehicle is driven for eight hours continuously. The nature of the job means in reality staff are exposed to much less than this.

5) How the noise and vibration levels are monitored both initially and as vehicles age and in what conditions they are tested (i.e. is the noise and vibration levels tested in a moving vehicle with all necessary front line ambulance equipment including stretcher?).

New vehicles undergo initial tests completed with 90kg sandbag ballast on seats (passenger and trolley cots). Includes loading device (agreed specification of ramp or tail lift), carriage of carry chairs and other operational equipment routinely transported.

Vehicles undergo eight weekly safety checks and defects can be reported by crew to workshops. Defects may include noticeable changes to noise or vibration experienced by crew or patients.

6) Also can you please advise the model and makes of vehicle tested for front-line transportation of patients.

- 2014 - Mercedes Sprinter (technical specification made available)
- Prior to 2014 - Mercedes Sprinter & VW Crafter (conformity assured by builder)
- 2010 - 2012 Peugeot Boxer (conformity assured by builder)

Review Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which I have dealt with your request, you are entitled to require a review of this decision. Should you decide to request a review you must:

Apply for a review of our decision in writing within 40 working days of the date of this notice and include:

- An address for further correspondence

Scottish Ambulance Service, National Headquarters, Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9EB

Telephone: 0131 314 0000

www.scottishambulance.com

- A description of the original request and
- The reason(s) why you are dissatisfied with our decision.

You should address your request for a review of decision to:

Mark Hannan
Head of Corporate Affairs and Engagement
Scottish Ambulance Service
National Headquarters,
Gyle Square,
1 South Gyle Crescent,
Edinburgh, EH12 9EB
0131 314 0000
E-mail: mark.hannan3@nhs.net

The requests for a review would be passed to another manager who was not involved in the original decision to assess the application.

Following the review you would receive notice of the result as soon as possible but in any case within 20 working days of us receiving it. Our response would explain the decision of the reviewer as well as details of how to appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner if you remain dissatisfied with the review decision reached by us.

If you wish to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner you may do so at the details below:

Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
KY16 9DS
Telephone: 01334 464610
e-mail: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

You can also make your appeal online via the Commissioner's website at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. This link gives you help in real time explaining exactly what is needed so the Commissioner can investigate your case quickly.

Yours sincerely,

Lora Vernon
Corporate Affairs and Engagement