



**Kent
Police**



Freedom of Information, Information Compliance Unit, Kent Police Headquarters, Sutton Road,
Maidstone, Kent ME15 9BZ Phone: **01622 654413** Fax: **01622 654437**
Email: freedomofinformation@kent.pnn.police.uk

Mr D Blackman
request-36022-6965a1bc@whatdotheyknow.com

Date: 16th June 2010

Tel No. (DDI) 01622 654429

FOI Ref. 3545/2010

Dear Mr Blackman,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 3545/2010

I write in connection with correspondence received by Kent Police on 26th May 2010. I am now able to respond as follows:

I notice your Officers now wear tac vests in preference to the duty belts worn by other forces. Please could you

*a) Confirm the reason for this.
and*

b) If the reason relates to back problems caused by duty belts, please confirm whether any research has been undertaken by Kent Police as to the effects of duty belts on lower back problems.

Police Officers in Kent have the option to wear either the more traditional equipment belt or the 'tac vest', which in force we know as the load vest.

Kent Police originally introduced our load vest approximately eight years ago to assist some officers who were experiencing back problems. At that stage we involved our Occupational Health Department for advice. Having done some research Kent Police decided to offer a load vest as an alternative to the belt.

Seven years ago we issued Stab Vests to all our patrol officers. A sizeable number experience problems when wearing the stab vest with the equipment belt as when seated or driving the belt caused the stab vest to ride up and cause discomfort in the neck/throat area. This problem was remedied by making the load vest available to the officers experiencing this problem.

Thank you for your interest in Kent Police. If you have any further queries concerning your request, or the application of the Freedom of Information Act in general, please contact this office quoting the reference number shown above.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Potten
Freedom of Information Administrator

Your right to complain

We take our responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act seriously but, if you feel your request has not been properly handled or you are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of your request, you have the right to complain. We will conduct an internal review to investigate the matter and endeavour to reply within 20 working days.

You may lodge your complaint by writing to:

Information Compliance Unit
Professional Standards Department
Kent Police Headquarters
Sutton Road,
Maidstone Kent
ME15 9BZ

Or by e-mailing
freedomofinformation@kent.pnn.police.uk

If you are still dissatisfied following our internal review, you have the right under section 50 of the Act to complain directly to the Information Commissioner. Before considering your complaint, the Information Commissioner would normally expect you to have exhausted the complaints procedures provided by Kent Police.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

FOI Compliance Team (complaints)
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF