



Information Policy & Compliance
bbc.co.uk/foi bbc.co.uk/privacy

05 April 2013

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – RF120130167

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act ('the Act') of 04 February 2013, seeking information about how the BBC operates during a power blackout. We have repeated each part of your request and our responses below. The full text of your original request is set out in Appendix 1.

Where the BBC gets its power from?

The BBC gets its power from the National Grid.

[What is the] emergency planning policy for a power blackout (in regards to priorities – if everything had to be pulled off air to save power, would there still be a 6pm news bulletin, for example?)

Does the BBC have backup generators? How long do they last for? How long the BBC could stay on air during a sustained power blackout? How long could BBC radio stay on air during a power blackout?"

I can confirm that the BBC has a layered resilience model that protects its output dependent on its priority. Part of this resilience includes generation to back up key systems and services. The duration of these systems is dependent on their criticality.

I'm afraid that we are withholding the remainder of the information you seek under Section 24 of the Act (National Security). The BBC, like a number of other organisations, form a part of the nation's critical national infrastructure. Therefore the BBC has to protect its assets and broadcast capability at all times to maintain this capability and status. Part of our protection strategy is to not release to third parties any information that might, intentionally or otherwise, expose the BBC's ability to broadcast at all times. If information related to the processes and equipment at emergency broadcasting sites were disclosed, this could enable others to use that information to attack or disable our networks, or those operated to provide services to us, and would possibly prevent us from delivering information to the public in times of national emergency.

Please note that we are not implying you wish to use any of the information you have requested for malicious purposes; however, information disclosed under the Act is considered to be disclosed to the general public and it is therefore necessary to take into account that it could be used for such purposes by others.

As this exemption is a qualified exemption under the Act, we are required to consider the public interest in disclosing the requested information.

We recognise that it is in the public interest that the BBC is as open as possible to licence-fee payers about the measures in place to provide broadcasts in times of emergency, in order to reassure the public that such measures are satisfactory.

Against the public interest in releasing this information are our obligations to provide information and services in times of emergency and crisis, which are set out in the Charter and Agreement. Disclosing the information requested could damage our ability to provide such services, which is clearly not in the public interest.

I am satisfied, in terms of section 2 of the Act, that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied that we have complied with the Act in responding to your request, you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager or legal adviser. Please contact us at the address above, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545 700 or see <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Eddie Haling,
Head of Corporate Security
British Broadcasting Corporation

Appendix I: Full wording of your request received on 04 February 2013

"I'd like to gather some statistics and information about how the BBC operates during a power blackout.

"Please could you let me know:

- Where the BBC gets its power from?*
- Emergency planning policy for a power blackout (in regards to priorities – if everything had to be pulled off air to save power, would there still be a 6pm news bulletin, for example?)*
- Does the BBC have backup generators?*
- How long do they last for?*
- How long the BBC could stay on air during a sustained power blackout?*
- How long could BBC radio stay on air during a power blackout?"*