



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

Information Compliance Team
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Sent by email to:

[REDACTED]

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Date: 14 February 2024

Our Reference: FOI 116 23-24

Enquiries to: Information Compliance Officer

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Dear [REDACTED]

We are writing in respect of your application for the release of information held by the Service, which we received on 30 November 2023 which was later clarified on 17 January 2024. We can confirm that we have now completed our search for the information requested.

You asked:

Following the recent flooding in October and November on the Isle of Wight, I was wondering if you would be able to provide me with the following information, although we would be happy for you to provide us with any other information you feel would be relevant?

- Historic flood incidents (24 to 26 October 2023)
- Emergency response procedures to flooding (if available)

Our answer:

We can confirm we hold the information requested. For the information regarding historic flood incidents between 24 and 26 October 2023, it is as follows:

We had 114 calls that came from 87 properties of the following types:

Rescue from Vehicle in Water	1
Assist from Vehicle in Water	3
Flooding from Internal Source	7
Flooding from External Source	103

We attended 7 of these calls which were the following incident types:

- 3 – rescue or evacuation from water
- 3 – flooding
- 1 – false alarm due to apparatus – due to water ingress in alarm

Please find attached four documents that together make up our emergency response procedures to flooding attached. For your awareness, we have redacted the personal data from the documents as per Section 40 of the Freedom Information Act 2000. This is because it would be unfair to release this to the world at large as per the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Regarding the file entitled 'FOI 116 - Adverse Weather_Redacted' we have had to redact some parts of the document.

Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) holds contact details for various agencies. However, this information is exempt under Section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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 these contact details would enable people with malicious intent to phone the agencies up and report incidents diverting resources prejudice our ability to respond to incidents quickly and efficiently and effective conduct of information. This would delay our response to incidents, cause us to deploy resources to non-existent incidents and disrupt other station activities.

National Security

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) are refusing to provide you with some information due to the National Security exemption. The information redacted 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 to safeguard 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 the targeting of rescues critical to respond to major incident.

Health and Safety

Further, we are refusing to provide the locations of our vehicles on the grounds that it would be likely to endanger the health and safety of individuals, as per sections 38(1) (a) and (b) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

While we are not questioning the motives of the applicant, a disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is deemed to be to the world at large. This information can be used by criminals to target valuable equipment at stations for theft. This would lead to an increased

risk to the safety of operational staff, staff from other agencies and other people who operate at or are visiting the station. This would also have consequences for the public as it would impinge on our ability to respond to incidents endangering lives.

Public Interest Test

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

For Disclosure

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

- it promotes transparency, showing that we have appropriate vehicles/capabilities and that they are appropriately located.
- it helps people to understand the workings of the station.
- it shows what types of incidents we respond to and what resources we deploy which is of general public interest.
- there is a general interest in our vehicles which has been expressed by several members of the public.
- shows we have direct contact details to partner agencies
- showing we have appropriate procedures in place to deal with flooding incidents

Against Disclosure

There are also several reasons against the disclosure of the information as follows:

- be likely to endanger the lives of members of the public by increasing the time taken to attend incidents to carry out lifesaving work.
- be used to facilitate and increase the effects of terrorist activities in our area and attacks on our vehicles and stations.
- it would be likely to endanger the safety of our staff in our vehicles and both staff and visitors to our stations were such an attack to take place.
- Prejudice the effective communication between agencies and disrupt the effective resolution of incidents

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 compromise our ability to respond to incidents of all types (and engage in other community safety-related work) effectively and would endanger the health and safety of those at our stations and prejudice our ability to conduct public affairs. Therefore, we believe that the balance of public interests favours not disclosing this information.

The above concludes our investigation into this matter.

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 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 Commissioners Office. This can be done online at www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints or by post to The Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

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