



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

Information Compliance Team
Headquarters
Leigh Road
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO50 9SJ

Sent by email to:

[REDACTED]

t. 02380 626850
e. DP@hantsfire.gov.uk
w. hantsfire.gov.uk

Date: 28 April 2023

Our Reference: FOI 161 22-23

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 March 2023. We can confirm that we have now completed our search for the information requested.

You asked:

Would you be able to confirm that you have issued a report concerning a fire at Solent Apartments to Principle Estate Management.

I am unsure as to whether you would be able to furnish me with the report.

Our answer:

We can confirm that we hold the information requested. We sent a copy of the report to Principle Estate Management on the 26th of April 2023.

Regarding the fire report you are requesting, please find it attached. For your awareness, we have redacted some of the information. We are refusing to provide you with all the personal data on the report as per Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. As it would be unfair to release this within the meaning of the UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

National Security Exemption

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (HIWFRS) holds the callsigns of our vehicles. However, this information 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 for the purposes of safeguarding 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 our vehicles' callsigns would enable the tracking and targeting of them to prevent us from responding in the event of criminal/terrorist activity. This would increase the severity, impact and risk to lives in the event of an attack, would be to the detriment of providing an efficient emergency service and a failure in our duty of care to all members of the public.

Public Interest Test

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

Public Interest in 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.
- shows we have callsigns for our vehicles so can be identifiable.

Public Interest Against Disclosure

- 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.

Health and Safety Exemption

We are refusing to provide the location/base 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.

Public Interest Test

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

Public Interest in 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 to tackle incidents.
- shows the vehicles are coming from a nearby location so that they have been able to get to the incident quickly.

Public Interest Against Disclosure

There are also significant reasons why providing the information is not in the public interest as it may:

- endanger our staff and visitors' safety at our stations.
- lead to an increased risk of theft of equipment from our vehicles.

This would negatively affect our ability to carry out our life-saving work and lead to increased public costs in replacing the equipment. This would not be an efficient use of taxpayer funds.

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 criminal/terrorist activities and would endanger the health and safety of those at our stations. Therefore, we believe that the balance of public interest favours not disclosing this information.

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 Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

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