



Ministry
of Defence

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Our Reference:
FOI2020/01347
Date:
24 February 2020

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 29 January 2020 requesting the following information:

"I am writing to request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act some information concerning the MOD's vehicle depot at Ashchurch in Gloucestershire.

In particular, I am interested in the recent reports of asbestos contamination at the site. Could you provide the following information:

- 1. How many buildings have been found to be contaminated and to what level?***
- 2. What is the total number of buildings on the site?***
- 3. What types of buildings have been confirmed as contaminated? (i.e. vehicle hangers, offices, workshops or others?)***
- 4. How many army vehicles have been found to be contaminated, if possible broken down by type? (i.e. Warriors, Mastiff, Challenger, MAN truck, etc)***
- 5. Has a decontamination plan been approved and what is its estimated cost?***
- 6. How many buildings and vehicles have been decontaminated to date?***
- 7. What measures have been taken to safeguard staff until the decontamination work is complete? (i.e. placing buildings and vehicles out of use)?"***

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below.

Question 1 - How many buildings have been found to be contaminated and to what level?

Thirty-six buildings within the vehicle depot have been found to be contaminated.

Thirty-two of the buildings in the vehicle depot remain contaminated and under limited access arrangements whilst the decontamination programme continues. Air monitoring reveals that the Defence Equipment & Support

number of fibres per millilitre of air (f/ml) in and around these buildings remains below the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) control limit of 0.1 f/ml and clearance indicator of 0.01 f/ml. The potential risk to individuals of exposure to asbestos on site has been assessed by the MOD's independent asbestos expert witness and the HSE as very low.

Question 2 - What is the total number of buildings on the site?

There are 36 buildings on the vehicle depot site.

Question 3 - What types of buildings have been confirmed as contaminated? (i.e. vehicle hangers, offices, workshops or others?)

All of the above.

Question 4 - How many army vehicles have been found to be contaminated, if possible broken down by type? (i.e. Warriors, Mastiff, Challenger, MAN truck, etc)

Up to circa 6,500 vehicles may have been contaminated. The breakdown by vehicle type is, as follows:

Platform Type	Vehicle Types (not exhaustive)
A Vehicle (Armoured tracked)	CHALLENGER 2, WARRIOR, CVR(T), BULLDOG, TROJAN, AS90
Wheeled Support Vehicles	MAN SV (6T / 9T / 15T), LAND ROVER, PINZGAUER, WHEELED TANKER
Protected Mobility (PM) Vehicles	MASTIFF, COUGAR, HUSKY, FOXHOUND, JACKAL, RIDGBACK
Trailers	0.75T, 3T, AVRE, Penman, Kings, High Mobility Trailer
Other (Utility)	Bridging, Box bodies, Plant machinery, Front end equipment

Question 5 - Has a decontamination plan been approved and what is its estimated cost?

Yes, a decontamination plan has been approved and is underway. The estimated cost is circa £20M.

Question 6 - How many buildings and vehicles have been decontaminated to date?

As at 14 February 2020: four buildings (with two others in the process of being cleaned by end March 2020) and 1,399 vehicles have been decontaminated.

Question 7 - What measures have been taken to safeguard staff until the decontamination work is complete? (i.e. placing buildings and vehicles out of use)

All contaminated vehicles, equipment and buildings remain out of bounds to all personnel, apart from licenced contractors and military vehicle specialists trained and equipped to carry out decontamination. The entire site remains subject to extensive and ongoing air monitoring (circa 500 tests per week) to safeguard all staff.

The HSE has conducted an inspection of the Ashchurch site and the decontamination activity. In a letter to Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) it concluded that: "Our investigation did not identify any non-compliance with asbestos management health and safety legislation. Indeed we concluded that there were areas, based on the evident risk, where you appeared to be taking measures far in excess of what the law requires".

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

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If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely


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