



Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Freedom of Information Team

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Your Ref

Our Ref

FOIR2037/10

Date:

13 August 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

Freedom of Information request

Thank you for your request for information dated 12 July 2010 under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA).

You asked for information concerning the loss of V5 documents in the series BG8229501 to BG9999030 and BI2305501 to BI2800000. The circumstances of the loss and actions taken to reduce the impact on the public of the loss either by DVLA or its agents.

You particularly asked:

1. When and from whom, were these documents received by the DVLA?

The defective documents were received from the printers Paragon UK in February 2006.

2. What was the means of carriage inwards to the DVLA and what security procedures were in place?

While this information is held it is being withheld as disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. Section 31(1)(a) of the FoIA allows DVLA to exempt information from disclosure if its disclosure under the FoIA would or would be likely to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. In considering whether to withhold the information, DVLA carried out a public interest test to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information. A further detail of why DVLA believe the exemption applies is contained in the attached Annex A.



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3. Were these documents, or any of them, used in normal processes by the DVLA?

No, all defective documents were returned to Paragon UK for secure destruction.

4. When were these V5C documents withdrawn from use?

The defective documents were sent for destruction in November 2006.

5. Why were they withdrawn from use?

The documents had a different background colour on the Notification of Permanent Export (V5C/4) tear off slip on the second page, which looked mauve on the front and pink on the reverse. On legitimate documents they should be mauve on both sides.

6. Where V5C documents are withdrawn from use, what is the DVLA policy for destruction or disposal of such documents?

In November 2006, due to the high number of defective documents Paragon used an outside contractor for the destruction. Since the stolen documents came to light in January 2007, all defective documents are now securely destroyed on site, whether they are at DVLA or at the originating printers.

7. What procedures are intended to be used under this policy for the destruction or disposal of such documents, at what location and under what security supervision?

Any waste, spoilt or substandard documents are now securely destroyed on site at DVLA or the printers. Stringent audit and physical security controls are in place around the handling of secure DVLA documents and DVLA staff attend off-site document destruction as needed.

8. When were these V5C documents destroyed, by whom and what location?

In November 2006 the defective documents were transported from Paragon UK for destruction to a company PHS Datashred.

9. Were these particular documents dealt with under DVLA policies and procedures?

Due to the large volume of documents involved DVLA agreed to a request from the printers to contract the work for the destruction of the documents to another company. It was then the responsibility of the printers to ensure that the destruction of the documents was dealt with under DVLA policies and procedures.

10. If not why not

Please refer to the answer to question 9.

11. Were agents of the DVLA involved in the disposal process?

Paragon UK were involved as our agents in the disposal process.

12. Was any part of the disposal and destruction of these V5C documents undertaken outside of the DVLA premises?

Yes, the disposal and destruction of all defective documents were undertaken by companies outside of DVLA premises.

13. If so, was this a departure from normal procedures?

In 2006 defective documents still at the printers had to be destroyed by them on site. On this occasion due to the volume of documents involved, agreement was given by DVLA to the printers to subcontract out the destruction work to another company.

14. If so, why was a departure from normal procedures allowed and by whom?

The departure from normal procedures was allowed due to the volume of documents involved. The decision was made between Paragon and DVLA.

15. Was a DVLA officer present at the disposal and destruction of the V5C documents?

In 2006 it was not DVLA policy to have an official present at the destruction of documents.

16. If not, who was responsible for the security and destruction of these documents?

The destruction of the documents was the responsibility of our printers Paragon UK.

17. Did DVLA check and approve the destruction processes in advance of any handling by third parties?

Under the terms of the contract with our printers the responsibility for the destruction of documents was with Paragon UK whether they were destroyed at their site or that of a third party.

18. Have lessons been learned following the loss of these V5s and have any policies been changed in consequence?

Any waste, spoilt or substandard documents are now securely destroyed on-site, whether they are at DVLA or at the originating printers. Stringent audit and physical security controls are in place around the handling of secure DVLA documents.

Arrangements for the handling and destruction of secure documents have been thoroughly reviewed and tightened further and there have been no further incidents of this nature. Steps taken include:

- (a) High powered industrial shredding destruction of documents on site;
- (b) tougher contract terms with service providers

19. Has DVLA paid out any compensation to persons adversely affected by the loss of these secure V5C documents?

Although DVLA has no legal obligation to pay compensation, three people have been paid compensation as a gesture of goodwill as all were prior to DVLA Press releases warning motorists to be on the lookout for stolen certificates.

20. Has any other person paid out compensation to persons adversely affected by the loss of these secure documents?

DVLA is not aware of compensation being paid by others to those who have bought stolen vehicles.

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If you are unhappy with the way the DVLA has handled your request, you may write to Freedom of Information, DVLA – D16, Longview Road, Swansea, SA6 7JL or by e-mail for an internal review. The email address is foi@dvla.gsi.gov.uk . Please remember to quote the reference above in future communications. The attached Annex B provides details of the Department for Transport's complaints procedure as well as your right to contact the Information Commissioner for a decision.

Yours sincerely

FoI Team
DVLA