



Ministry
of Defence

[REDACTED]
DE&S SEC Policy Secretariat

Defence Equipment and Support
MOD Abbey Wood
Bristol
BS34 8JH



Email: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Our Reference: [REDACTED]

Date: 23 January 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Request for Information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act

Further to our letter of 16 January 2015, I am now writing to provide you with a final response to your FOI request, dated 26 August 2014, in which you asked for the following:

A copy of the Abnormal Event report for each abnormal incident, with the potential to challenge a nuclear safety system and reported to a regulator, recorded at the Atomic Weapons Establishment between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013 inclusive.

This is a more refined version of request MOD_1_14 / 07012014-151631-006 which I submitted earlier this year but which was turned down on cost grounds.

I believe it is similar to FOI requests made in the past to the Ministry of Defence which satisfied the necessary criteria and so received a full response.

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence holds information that falls within the scope of your request. Five abnormal events were identified as within scope of your request, and the relevant reports are enclosed. We very much regret that the process has taken longer than originally anticipated.

I must inform you that some of the information in the documents has been withheld under Section 24(1) of the FOI Act, which exempts information from disclosure for the protection of national security. In reaching this decision we applied a balance of public interest test to determine whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the greater public interest lies in withholding or releasing the information. It is recognised that there is a public interest in releasing information about incidents which could challenge a nuclear safety system at AWE, and how they are dealt with, as this information helps to build public confidence. It is assessed that the greater public interest, however, lies in withholding certain information about AWE sites and details of their particular operations. This is because the release of information that provides specific details of AWE activities and processes, including details

Defence Equipment & Support

of materials, tools and other engineering information, would be useful to organisations or nations seeking to develop a nuclear weapons capability or seeking to target AWE, and would therefore harm national security.

Personal information contained in the documents has also been redacted under exemption Section 40(2) of the Act. As this is an absolute exemption, a public interest test is not required.

As a result, please find enclosed the five redacted documents which are screenshots from the AWE event database.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,


Defence Equipment & Support Policy Secretariat