



# Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat  
Spitfire Block  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4UE

Ref. 2016/4684



12 May 2016

Dear ,

Thank you for your e-mail of 24 April 16 asking for details of the Swiss F-18 aircraft that displayed at the RAF Cosford Air Show 2015.

You requested the following information:

*"...The risk assessment undertaken for the specific climbing manoeuvre of the Swiss F-18 aircraft on the Air Show practice day 2015 and in particular the assessment of the potential for noise/vibration damage given the history of this type of aircraft elsewhere.*

*...The CAA document signing off the above manoeuvre.*

*...Confirmation that the same aircraft undertook the same manoeuvre in the same location on Air Show Day as on the practice day."*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held and the following documents have been attached.

1. Switzerland National Public Display Authority.
2. UK Flying Display Approval Questionnaire (Annex B)- Page 1.
3. UK Flying Display Approval Questionnaire (Annex B)- Page 2.
4. Swiss F-18 Display – Ribbon Diagram – Flat Display.
5. Swiss F-18 Display – Ribbon Diagram – Full Display.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Additionally, under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) of the Act you may find it helpful to understand the authorization process of foreign military aircraft that partake in Flying Displays at MoD establishments.

The RAF Cosford Air Show is a military air show and follows Military Aviation Authority regulations and not Civil Aviation Authority regulations. All military flying is subject to stringent regulations designed to ensure flight safety. All display acts that participated in the 2015 RAF Cosford Air Show were required to comply with Military Aviation Authority regulations (Regulatory Article 2335, Issue 6<sup>1</sup>) and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-article-ra-2335-flying-displays-and-special-events>

The Swiss Air Force approved the Public Display Authority for the pilot and aircraft<sup>2</sup>. The Public Display Authority assures the quality and safety of the display and only permits the manoeuvres and sequences to be flown as detailed by the display ribbon diagrams. The Military Aviation Authority reviews the request for the aircraft to display at a military event (UK Flying Display Approval Questionnaire - Annex B) and the RAF Cosford Flying Display Director assures the safety and quality of the display during a practice validation (held on Saturday 13 June 2015). Only then was the aircraft finally authorised for public display on Sunday 14 June 15.

All aircraft are certified for flight by national regulators having met stringent design and airworthiness specifications. The RAF Cosford Air Show does not assess noise and vibration characteristics for aircraft as these would be covered under the aircraft's certification process. Any limitations imposed on the aircraft or its power plant would be included within the aircraft's Release to Service. The Swiss F-18 aircraft display was conducted within the normal operating envelope for the aircraft. The MOD holds no information on specific engine noise from F-18 Aircraft. The MOD also holds no information on risk assessments on air display aircraft noise signatures, as these are not required.

Finally, we can confirm that it was the same aircraft and pilot that undertook both the practice and Air Show displays. The pilot is required to follow the manoeuvres as detailed in his Public Display Authority which were identical to the ribbon diagrams enclosed with this letter. Therefore all the manoeuvres would be in a broadly similar location or area. However, the pilot does have a degree of latitude within his display to maintain safety, for example, to avoid low cloud before commencing a manoeuvre.

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, 2nd 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,

  
Air DRes Sec 3a1

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<sup>1</sup> RA 2335 Issue 5 was in effect in June 2015. Issue 6 was published on 27 April 2016.

<sup>2</sup> The pilot was approved in 2014 to be the display pilot for both the 2014 and 2015 display seasons.