



Ministry of Defence

Defence Resources Secretariat
Ministry of Defence
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E-mail: DGFinance-SecParliamentaryFOI@mod.uk

Reference: **FOI2015/06921**

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Date: **2 September 2015**

Dear [REDACTED],

Your correspondence dated 4 August 2015 has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

Please could you tell me the estimated value of a) champagne b) wine c) spirits held by each of the three services (showing the figures for each service).

For each service please could list the three most valuable bottles of a) champagne b) wine c) spirits.

I am writing to confirm that MOD holds information on the subject you have requested. However, I have to advise you that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate limit. This is because to locate, retrieve and extract the information in scope of your request would involve contacting all budget areas in the MOD to investigate individual purchases of alcoholic drinks, which would entail at least 25 man days of effort.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 16 of the FOIA, public authorities are required to provide advice and assistance while processing FOI requests, and I have therefore included some additional information below that you may find useful.

The MOD does not maintain a central stock of alcoholic drinks purchased at public expense. MOD personnel in the UK and permanent bases overseas are primarily catered for through a number of catering, retail, leisure and other multi-activity contracts to deliver catering and other services. Alcoholic drinks that are purchased by individual units (including messes, galleys and kitchens) through contracts with local suppliers is paid for by the consumer at point of sale.

The MOD does, however, have strict rules on hospitality, including the purchase of alcohol. The provision of alcoholic drinks at public expense is to be in moderation and with due regard to the form of hospitality being provided. Public funds are not to be used for "drinks only" functions, other than at Official Receptions. The MOD regulations for purchasing alcohol are in JSP 456 Defence Catering Manual which provides an amalgam of regulations, guides, advice and a point of reference for Service caterers to assist them in the delivery of the catering function across the entire range and diversity of Armed Forces catering. JSP 456 can be found at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jsp-315-services-accommodation-code--2>

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.org.uk>.

I hope you find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Resources Secretariat