



Ministry
of Defence

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Ref: FOI2017/03861

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20 April 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 23 March 2017 in which you clarified that you were requesting the following information:

'1. In terms of timescales, please can you focus your search over the past 10 years. I would really like to understand the trends over time in terms of major and minor injuries on RFA type vessels. In particular I want to understand how significant manual handling type injuries are on such vessels, given the type of vessel

2. Yes my current focus is just to look at RFA vessels only'

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence does hold the information you have requested which is detailed in the Annex attached to this letter.

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, Ground Floor, Zone D, 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>.

Yours sincerely

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section

1. Between 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2017 there were **1,635** personnel¹ injured whilst on a Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA)² vessel:

- (i) **288** personnel suffered major injuries.
- (ii) **1,347** personnel suffered minor injuries.

2. **Table 1** presents the number of personnel injured whilst on an RFA and the number of those that were manual handling type injuries.

Table 1: UK Service Personnel and Civilians injured whilst on an RFA and manual handling incidents by severity classification, Numbers ^{1 2 3}
1 April 2007 to 31 March 2017

Severity classification	Number of personnel injured	Of which manual handling injuries
All	1,635	170
Major ⁴	288	31
Minor ⁴	1,347	139

Source: MOD Health and Safety systems; Notification of Casualties (NOTICAS) system and Aeromedical Evacuation Cell (AECC)

Notes

1. Numbers include UK Service personnel (Regular and Reservist) and Civilians (Civilians include Royal Fleet Auxiliary plus Entitled and Non-Entitled Civilians).
2. The number of injuries has been compiled from multiple data sources. A casualty will only be counted once for their injury, even if they appear in all datasets.
3. If a UK Service person or UK Civilian has more than one injury reported in separate incidents, each will be counted.
4. Major incidents are classified as VSI, SI, III, Specified, Major or Serious. Minor incidents are classified as UL or minor. Please see description of severity classifications.

Background notes

3. The number of personnel that were injured whilst on an RFA vessel between 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2017 presented in this FOI response should be treated as a minimum. This is due to the following reasons:

- Late reporting of incidents due to some incidents not being reported directly.
- MOD Health and Safety systems; Notification of Casualties and Aeromedical Evacuations were the only data sources used to identify the number of personnel that were injured whilst on an RFA vessel.
- numbers presented exclude those personnel that were only seen by a medical officer and not subsequently reported through the above data sources.

¹ Numbers include UK Service personnel (Regular and Reservist) and Civilians (Civilians include Royal Fleet Auxiliary plus Entitled and Non-Entitled Civilians).

² The civilian-manned Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) delivers worldwide logistical and operational support for the wide range of tasks the Royal Navy undertakes including war fighting, counter-piracy, humanitarian and disaster relief, and counter-narcotics operations.

- due to the free text nature of these data, it is possible that other relevant terms should have been used to search for manual handling incidents (see paragraph 5).

4. A search was carried out on all reported injury incidents that were a result of manual handling whilst on a RFA ship between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2017 using the following keywords: “handling”, “lifting”, “lowering”, “carrying”, “pushing” and “pulling”. Defence Statistics (Health) has visually validated and checked all search returns and excluded all duplicate records and any incidents that did not relate directly to manual handling. Please note that only those records with this term in the free text summary will have been included, it may be possible for there to be other manual handling incidents for which no reference has been made to these terms, therefore these numbers should be treated as a minimum.

Data sources

Health and Safety

5. MOD personnel report health and safety incidents using a variety of reporting mechanisms. Since 2005, Armed Forces personnel and civilians report incidents to Incident Notification Cells or via their on-site Safety, Health, Environment and Fire (SHEF) advisors. Defence Statistics Health then collate this data into a single Health and Safety dataset. The data presented cover incidents which include any person whose injury was recorded on the below MOD health and safety systems:

- Army Incident Notification Cell (AINC) as at 3 April 2017
- Accident and Incident Recording System (AIRS) as at 3 April 2017
- Defence Equipment & Support Incident Notification Cell (DINC) as at 3 April 2017
- Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIOINC) as at 3 April 2017
- Joint Forces Command (JFC) as at 3 April 2017
- Head Office and Corporate Services (HOCS) as at 3 April 2017
- Naval Service Incident Notification Cell (NSINC) as at 3 April 2017

6. Major injuries and health and safety incidents were classified with a severity classification of major, specified or serious. Minor injuries and ill health incidents were classified with a severity classification of minor. A description of the severity classifications are as follows:

Severity – injury and ill health incidents are categorised by the following levels of severity:

- Specified injuries and illnesses** are defined by the HSE as work-related cases which includes:
 - a fracture, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes;
 - amputation of an arm, hand, finger, thumb, leg, foot or toe;
 - permanent loss of sight or reduction of sight;
 - crush injuries leading to internal organ damage;
 - serious burns (covering more than 10% of the body, or damaging the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs);
 - scalplings (separation of skin from the head) which require hospital treatment;
 - unconsciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia;
 - any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space, which leads to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- Major injuries and illnesses** are defined by the HSE as work-related cases which:

- Could result in death or in hospitalisation (or being confined to a bed, if at sea) for more than 24 hours.
 - Result in a person who was not at work being taken to hospital for treatment
 - A specific type of injury e.g. fracture (except for fingers, thumbs and toes)
 - HSE renamed the category of 'major' injuries to 'specified' injuries in October 2013, although MOD Health and Safety systems have been capturing incidents under this definition since April 2014, it will not be reported on until April 2016 to allow time for the transition. Therefore the 'major' injuries in this report are both those classified as 'major' and 'specified'.
- c. **Serious injuries and illnesses** From April 2012 serious injuries equate to the HSE over-seven day category, and are those that are not defined as 'major' according to the above criteria but which could result in a person being unable to perform their normal duties for more than seven days. Prior to April 2012 serious injuries were those not defined as 'major' but which resulted in a person being unable to perform their normal duties for more than three days.
- d. **Minor injuries and illnesses** are those that are not classified as 'major' or 'serious'. This category will include the severities of 'slight' and 'trivial'.

Defence Statistics (Health) compiles Health and Safety statistics on behalf of Defence Safety and Environment Authority Corporate Policy and Assurance (DSEA-CPA). An Official Statistic publication 'MOD Health and Safety Statistics Annual Report' is released each year providing the number of reported injury and ill health incidents to UK Armed Forces personnel, Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian employees and other civilians that were recorded on the MOD's Health and Safety recording systems. This is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/defence-health-and-safety-statistics-index>