



Ministry of Defence

Our Reference: FOI2017/06787

Ministry of Defence

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Thank you for your email dated 11 July 2017 requesting the following information:

- *"How many rifles, pistols, or other firearms have been lost or stolen from the Ministry of Defence in each of the last three years.*
- *How many bullets have gone missing in the same period.*
- *How many of these rifles, pistols, or other firearms, have been recovered by the Department.*
- *How many bullets have been recovered by the department.*
- *What is the value of the weapons and bullets which have gone missing over the last three years.*
- *How many official documents have been lost by this department in the last 3 years. Could these be broken down please into how many classified documents, how many highly classified documents etc."*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested in the first five bullets can be found below, but some of the information falls entirely within the scope of absolute exemptions provided for at Section 21 (Information reasonably accessible to the applicant):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-responses-published-by-mod-week-commencing-3-july-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-responses-published-by-mod-week-commencing-10-july-2017>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foi-responses-published-by-mod-week-commencing-24-july-2017>

In respect of your question *"How many official documents have been lost by this department in the last 3 years. Could these be broken down please into how many classified documents, how many highly classified documents etc."* I can 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.

The Department promotes a culture where security is the responsibility of all staff and personnel are required to report all security incidents including near misses. This can result in figures for incidents appearing higher than comparable organisations. MOD treats all breaches of security very seriously and requires all breaches to be reported regardless of whether there is firm evidence of loss or just an inability to account for some documents. All incidents are subjected to an initial security risk assessment with further action taken on a proportionate basis. There is a big difference between document loss and documents which cannot be accounted for at a muster. Investigation can often find that documents have been destroyed without having been correctly recorded. To provide a response we would need to look through the investigation reports for each incident which would make the cost of replying in full to your question around £1,187.

Section 12 of the 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.

Section 16 of the FOIA requires a public authority to offer advice and assistance on how to reduce or refine a request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit by narrowing or limiting its scope. I would advise that, if you reduced the time period to a single calendar year, we may be able to provide a response within the cost limit. Please contact the FOI-CIO team if you would like to refine your request or require advice on doing so.

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, 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, <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Directorate of Security and Resilience