



Ministry of Defence Police

Freedom of Information Manager

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E-mail: MDP-FOI-DP@mod.gov.uk

Our Ref: eCase: FOI 2021/07919

RFI: 223/21

Date: 16 September 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE: DRONES.

We refer to your email dated 20 July 2021 to the Ministry of Defence Police which was acknowledged on 22 July 2021.

We are treating your email as a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA 2000).

In your email you requested the following information:

1) How many times in the last two full calendar years (2019/2020) and so far this year has the MOD dealt with reported drone sightings over nuclear facilities or objects? Please include nuclear power stations as well as nuclear weapons facilities or nuclear powered objects such as boats or submarines. Please also provide as much information as you can about each reported sighting, including the location and description of the facility or nuclear object. By reported sightings I mean any sightings reported to the MOD from any external source and also any sightings reported by MOD staff as well.

2) Of these reported sightings, how many in each year were determined to have been legitimate sightings?

Please provide any information you can on the outcome of such reports, i.e. arrests etc.'

In response to my previous FOI request (MOD Reference FOI2021/06627) please can I request that the scope of my request be limited to those records held by the MDP. Please also reduce the time period of incidents requested to those occurring in the calendar year 2020.

A search for information has now been completed by the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) and we can confirm that we do hold information in scope of your request. However in respect of the location and the description of the facility concerning the sighting and any in

depth details concerning the sighting as well as the details of the person reporting the sighting, we have completed a Public Interest Test and we need to advise you that this information in scope of your request is being withheld under the following exemptions:

- Section 24 (1) National Security
- Section 26(1) Defence
- Section 31 (1) Law Enforcement
- Section 40 Personal Information

Sections 24, 26 and 31 are prejudice based qualified exemptions and there is a requirement to consider the public interest by conducting a public interest test.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest. Information relating to persons reporting incidents to the Ministry of Defence Police will not be disclosed in order to protect their personal data.

Section 24(1) has been applied because although the public are entitled to know how public funds are spent and how resources are distributed within policing, releasing full information in scope of your request would render national security measures less effective. This would lead to the compromise of ongoing or future operations to protect the security or infrastructure of the UK and increase the risk of harm to the public.

Section 26(1) has been applied because although release of the information would demonstrate commitment to transparency, releasing information allows for the likelihood that this information could prejudice the capability, effectiveness of the Ministry of Defence Police's ability to secure establishments connected to the UK's nuclear deterrent and therefore this would prejudice the defence of the UK.

Section 31(1) has been applied because although releasing this information would lead to better public awareness of operational policing and thereby a potential reduction in crime, releasing information could allow terrorists and individuals intent on carrying out criminal behaviour, to identify areas of the country with increased/reduced drone activity, identify responses to sightings of drones in certain locations, which could hinder the prevention and detection of future crime.

On balance, the public interest favours maintaining the exemptions and withholding the information you have requested as detailed above.

However we can release the following:

1) How many times in the calendar year 2020 has the MOD dealt with reported drone sightings over nuclear facilities or objects? Please include nuclear power stations as well as nuclear weapons facilities or nuclear powered objects such as boats or submarines. Please also provide as much information as you can about each reported sighting, including the location and description of the facility or nuclear object. By reported sightings I mean any sightings reported to the MOD from any external source and also any sightings reported by MOD staff as well.

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Details
Report of a drone flying nearby. No drone located.

Security personnel reported a drone being flown close to a facility.
Notification of commercial drone flight in the area.
Drone reported flying above a building on the site. No drone could be located.
Staff on site reported seeing a large drone. No drone located.
Officer reported seeing a drone flying. No drone located upon further search.
Staff observed a drone being flown.
Report of a large drone flying. Drone located and flying outside of the area.
Drone landed in the area and secured by security personnel.
Drone landed in the area and secured by security personnel.
Drone observed by personnel. Drone located.
Drone landed on site. Logged.
Notification of commercial drone flight in the area.
Drone recovered and returned to informant.
Notification of commercial drone flight in the area.
Report of a drone in the area. No drone located.
Report of a drone in the area. Drone not located.
Report of a drone over the site. No drone located.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request 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.gov.uk).

Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

MDP Secretariat and Freedom of Information Office