



Ministry of Defence Police

Freedom of Information Manager

Ministry of Defence Police

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

Our Ref: eCase: FOI 2023/03354

RFI: 088/23

Date: 17 April 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE POLICE: DRONES OVER NUCLEAR FACILITIES.

We refer to your clarification email dated 13th March 2023 to the Ministry of Defence Police which was acknowledged on the 13th March 2023.

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 calendar year (January 1 2021 December 31, 2021) did the MOD deal with reported drone sightings over nuclear facilities or nuclear objects? Please limit the scope of my request to those records held by the MDP. 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 were determined to have been legitimate sightings? Please provide any information you can on the outcome of such reports, i.e. arrests etc.**

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:

The data below is from August 2021 to December 2021 only. For January 2021 to July 2021 there is no information held.

1. Drone alarm activation, pilot located and given words of advice.
2. Notification of drone flight close.
3. Report of drone, area search carried out, no trace of drone or pilot.
4. Report of drone, area search, no trace, alarm not activated. NFA.
5. Drone alarm activation, area searched no trace. Crime report submitted.
6. Drone alarm activation, system error.
7. Officer reports seeing a drone, pilot located and spoken to, it was an accident, no footage of site obtained.

8. Drone alarm activation, search carried out, nothing found.

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