



WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

Information Management

Freedom Of Information

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Friday, 02 August 2013

Dear Mr McNamara

FOI Reference No: FOI-20132/327048

Thank you for your request for information received by West Yorkshire Police on 3rd July 2013.

You requested the following information. Your request is in blue font and our response is in black font:

1 a) On how many occasions in 2013 (up until today's date 2 July 2013) was a Taser deployed against an animal. Please provide the species of animal as well as how the Taser was deployed (i.e. drive-stun mode, firings and incidents where the taser was drawn and aimed.)

b) Please also provide a summary for each incident.

In 2013 a taser was fired twice in the same incident on an Akita dog. The circumstance for the use of taser is below:

The dog had broken free from home premises and entered fields nearby causing horses to flee onto the road. The dog then ran to a nearby public car park with its behaviour increasingly aggressive. The dog jumped towards Officers in attendance and members of the public. Taser deployed causing the dog to run and hide under a car nearby. The owner attended and secured the dog.

Please could you also provide:

2) The same for 2012

In 2012 a taser was aimed on one occasion on a Bull Mastiff Dog. The circumstance for the use of taser is below:

Officers entered an address to conduct a house search following the arrest of an individual, the dog became aggressive and Taser was drawn to protect the police dog handler officer whilst they secured the dog.

3) The same for 2011

In 2011 a taser was fired twice in two separate incidents. One of the dogs was a pit-bull and the other is not known. The circumstances for the use of taser in both instances are as below:

Officers attended the report of a domestic, on entering the garden a dog ran towards the attending officer, and fearing injury the taser was drawn and deployed causing the dog to flee back in the house.

Officers attended a report of a dangerous pit-bull type dog which had bitten someone earlier. Attempts were made to secure the dog using a dog pole and the owners assistance. These attempts were unsuccessful and the dog continued to be aggressive and dangerous. Taser was deployed causing the dog to be incapacitated long enough for the dog pole to be used.

4) The same for 2010

In 2010 a taser was fired once and aimed once in two separate incidents. One of the dogs was a Rottweiler the other was an American Bulldog. The circumstances for the use of taser in both instances are as below:

Whilst effecting the arrest of a person an American Bulldog bites officer on the hand and continues to snarl before running at officer again. Taser deployed at dog, owner removes wires and barbs mid cycle and restrains the dog.

Officers attend address to effect arrest of suspect. On entry Officers were confronted by an aggressive Rottweiler. The taser was drawn in anticipation of a possible attack, in order to defend themselves.

Over the past twelve months West Yorkshire Police have maintained strategic focus upon Taser and have continued to ensure that West Yorkshire Officers follow a Criteria for Use. This very much enhances its proportionate and legitimate application. We feel that this serves to protect the public and support officers who often find themselves in a position of making some very challenging decisions in difficult circumstances.

As with any new policing tactic opportunities to enhance its use are always sought. During the past twelve months all Taser trained officers have undertaken additional update and refresher training which has incorporated emphasis upon the criteria for use and learning from both local and national sources. An Assistant Chief Constable is responsible for Taser and collectively this systematic approach to the provision of detailed training, organisational learning, effective scrutiny around every single use of Taser and strategic oversight will give the public of West Yorkshire confidence that Taser is only used appropriately.

Taser is issued to specially trained officer, any use of the device only takes place following an assessment using the National Decision Model and the actual use of Taser is rare. Whilst Taser is not issued to officers for use against animals there may be spontaneous situations where in order to protect the public or themselves that officers do use Taser. Every use of Taser is subject to a debrief by a senior officer.

COMPLAINT RIGHTS

If you are not satisfied with how this request has been handled or with the information provided, please read the advice notice attached to this letter. If you do wish to take up your right of complaint, please remember to quote the reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Sue Durham
Head of Information Management

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COMPLAINT RIGHTS

1. Are you unhappy with how your request has been handled or do you think the decision is incorrect?

You have the right to request that West Yorkshire Police review their decision. Prior to lodging a formal complaint you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

2. Ask to have the decision looked at again

The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer that is nominated at the end of your decision letter. That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

3. Complaint

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision of West Yorkshire Police made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding access to information, you can lodge a written complaint to have the decision internally reviewed.

A West Yorkshire Police internal review of your decision will be carried out by a senior member of staff, who is fully trained in interpreting Freedom of Information legislation, yet is independent with regards to the original decision made, i.e. has never previously been involved with your request.

Complaints will only be treated as valid if they are received by West Yorkshire Police within a 60 day timeframe from the date of the decision letter. They must include the original FOI Reference Number and can only be submitted in writing by using the following contact details:

foi@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk

or

West Yorkshire Police
FOI Internal Reviews
PO Box 9
Laburnum Road
Wakefield
WF1 3QP

In all possible circumstances West Yorkshire Police will aim to complete and respond to your internal review within 20 working days; however this date may be extendable in exceptional circumstances by another 20 working days.

4. The Information Commissioner

If you are still dissatisfied with the internal review decision made by West Yorkshire Police, you may then make an application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can phone their helpline or write to them at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
FOI Help Line: 0303 1231113