



Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

From: XXXXXX

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Date: 14 April 2005

Our Ref: 014/014/0035/17

Dear XXXXXX

I am writing to confirm that the agency has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 18 March, that request was received on Monday 21 March. I wish to advise you that some of the information cannot be disclosed for the reasons given in the annex attached to this letter.

The information that can be disclosed is below, for ease of understanding I have answered the questions in the order that they were asked.

1. *Please could you advise me what training has been given to staff employed by VOSA in the stopping of moving and static vehicles on the highway, if possible it would be extremely useful to see the training material and related documentation on the level of training given to VOSA staff in this task.*

A. VOSA has assumed by stopping 'static' vehicles on the highway the enquirer means 'stand and stop' or stopping vehicles on foot. This information was contained in the previous FOI response dated 23 February 2005. VOSA staff currently attend a two week Police residential training course, the training is delivered by a recognised Police Driving School to Centrex standard and includes the following training modules:

- stopping vehicles on foot
- essential attitudes
- system of car control
- motorways/dual carriageways
- driving during the hours of darkness
- stopping vehicles (on mobile patrol)

The above driving modules are written to Roadcraft, and assessed to the Standard Level

The training material is provided by the Police and issued to the candidates who return this material to the Police after the course, any specific questions regarding the content of the course would need to be directed to the Police Force.

2. *Please could you provide a list of areas and counties by Police areas where VOSA staff are authorised to carry out the stopping of vehicles.*

A. VOSA have been accredited with the Powers to Stop in the following Police force areas: Avon and Somerset (Bristol & Somerset), Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Durham, Essex, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Metropolitan, Norfolk, North Wales, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire, West Mercia (Shropshire), West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Wiltshire.

3. *Please could you advise me what training VOSA staff have in respect of dealing with vehicles which fail to stop for VOSA checks and fail to pull over to allow VOSA officers to exercise the power to stop.*

A. VOSA staff are instructed to note the vehicle registration mark/s of any vehicle/s failing to stop. They are then required to submit a report which will be followed up either by the Police or another VOSA officer in the area where the driver/operator is based.

4. *When carrying out the power to stop, do VOSA staff have to wear any special uniform or clothing and what identification do they have to display and can I see a sample of the VOSA identification or authority carried by VOSA staff authorised to carry out stops.*

A. VOSA officers will wear a specific uniform which includes a high-visibility yellow jacket bearing the VOSA name and logo, this uniform has been agreed with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and clearly defines them as VOSA staff operating under Community Safety Accreditation. In addition, the uniform has epaulettes which bear the words 'Vehicle & Operator Services Agency'. As well as displaying the approved Community Safety Scheme accreditation badge and accreditation card, the officers will also carry an official VOSA warrant which displays the holders photograph and name. See annex B.

5. *Please could you provide a list of locations where VOSA vehicles used to carry out stops / power to stop are based by address and location and number of power to stop vehicles based there, also what advice and from whom did VOSA receive regarding the livery on the vehicles used to stop moving vehicles.*

A. Vehicles are allocated to our Enforcement Areas, they are normally based at our vehicle testing stations, the addresses of VOSA testing stations are published on the VOSA website. Local management teams determine where these vehicles will be based, due to operational requirements they may not always be based at the same location.

Advice on the livery on the vehicles was sought from the Department for Transport (Vehicle Standards and Engineering - VSE), the Home Office Police Scientific Development Branch - PSDB and Police livery suppliers. The advice consisted of what colours, patterns and materials could/should be used for effective conspicuity.

The eventual livery decided upon was derived from consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers, Department for Transport and representatives of the main trade associations (Confederation of Passenger Transport, Freight Transport Association and Road Haulage Association), all of whom were involved in the Powers to Stop project working group.

6. *What computer systems and databases does VOSA use in its ANPR vehicles and how often are these databases updated, and what is the purpose of the use of ANPR by VOSA.*

A. VOSA uses ANPR in order to achieve the following benefits:-

- To move from random stopping to intelligence led stopping
- To reduce the burden on compliant operators and focus our attention on the non-compliant
- As an intelligence tool to gather information on non-compliant activity for targeted enforcement
- As a feed into the national targeting framework
- As an agency initiative to identify offenders or potential offenders
- To proportionately deploy operational resource to meet perceived non-compliant threat
- As a visual deterrent to non-compliance

VOSA's targeting databases are currently updated once a week. This procedure is due to change to twice weekly, before eventually becoming daily in the next few months. The following targeting databases are used on VOSA's ANPR:-

HGVLIST	Determines if the observed vehicle is an HGV
NONGOL	Determines the existence of an Operator's Licence
PSVLIST	Determines if the observed vehicle is a PSV
CURTAL	Determines if a vehicle is listed as specified on a curtailed Operator's Licence
FORPRO	Determines if the observed vehicle has ever been the subject of a foreign vehicle prohibition
OUTTEST	Determines if the observed vehicle is operating without a current annual test certificate
OVLOAD	Determines if the observed vehicle has ever been the subject of an overloading prohibition
SMARKD	Determines if the observed vehicle has ever been the subject of an 'S' Marked mechanical prohibition
UNCLEAR	Determines if the observed vehicle is currently being used whilst under prohibition

7. *In respect of intelligence gathering by VOSA, does the RIPA Act apply and what databases and computer systems are used by VOSA for intelligence gathering purposes and by whom within VOSA and what information is held on these databases and computer systems, and what checks are carried out to make sure that the data is accurate and complies with the Data Protection Act.*

A. In certain circumstances Section II of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) could apply to the gathering of intelligence. VOSA is one of the authorities who have powers to conduct covert surveillance and deploy Covert Human Intelligence Sources under the Act. The VOSA Business Plan 2005/2006 contains information with regard to improving VOSA's intelligence capability. The business plan can be found on the VOSA website under corporate reports.

8. *How many applications under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 have been received by VOSA since the 1st of January 2005 to date and if possible could you please supply a list of the applications received and responses suitable for publication scheme use.*

A. VOSA has received 39 requests for information under FOIA in the period January 1 to date of receipt of your request. It is VOSA's intention that the requests for information and the response given, where possible, will be available via the website in due course.

If you are unhappy with the way the agency has handled your request you may ask for an internal review. You should contact **XXXXXX** if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:-

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

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