

**Finance and Corporate Services**  
Information Management

23 August 2011  
FOIA reference: F0001200

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent application of 16 August 2011, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

*I would like to know:*

- (1) How regularly commercial pilots are given random alcohol tests?*
- (2) If they are tested? Is the company that they work for responsible or the CAA?*
- (3) If an individual has witnessed a pilot, drinking heavily then driving to work within a few hours...how does one report such incidents? And, how can these individuals keep flying, when they have an alcohol dependency issue? Is the system self-regulatory - who is responsible?*

Our response:

In assessing your request in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we are pleased to be able to provide the information below.

In answer to points 1 and 2, random alcohol tests are undertaken by some UK operators. This is a matter for the airlines as employers of commercial pilots.

With regard to point 3, If an individual witnesses a pilot performing an aviation function (as defined by Section 94 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/20/section/94> ) and believes that the pilot is impaired by alcohol then, as the individual suspects a crime is being committed, they should report the incident to the police.

No pilot is permitted to fly with an alcohol dependency problem. If a pilot is suspected of having an alcohol dependency issue, the validity of their medical certificate is suspended and they are assessed in the CAA's Alcohol Misuse Clinic. If alcohol dependency is confirmed, then after appropriate treatment, they may be returned to flying duties under careful supervision by the Alcohol Misuse Clinic with the proviso that they maintain sobriety for the rest of their flying career.

The responsibility for preventing pilots flying whilst impaired by alcohol lies with the police. The responsibility for the medical certification of pilots with a history of alcohol dependence lies with the Civil Aviation Authority.

**Civil Aviation Authority**

Aviation House GW Gatwick Airport South Crawley West Sussex England RH6 0YR [www.caa.co.uk](http://www.caa.co.uk)  
Telephone 01293 768512 rick.chatfield@caa.co.uk

If you are not satisfied with how we have dealt with your request in the first instance you should approach the CAA in writing at:-

Mark Stevens  
External Response Manager  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Aviation House  
Gatwick Airport South  
West Sussex  
RH6 0YR

[mark.stevens@caa.co.uk](mailto:mark.stevens@caa.co.uk)

The CAA has a formal internal review process for dealing with appeals or complaints in connection with Freedom of Information requests. The key steps in this process are set in the attachment.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have a right under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act to appeal against the decision by contacting the Information Commissioner at:-

Information Commissioner's Office  
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
[www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx](http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx)

Should you wish to make further Freedom of Information requests, please use the e-form at <http://www.caa.co.uk/foi>.

Yours sincerely

Rick Chatfield  
FoIA & EIR Case Manager

## **CAA INTERNAL REVIEW & COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

- The original case to which the appeal or complaint relates is identified and the case file is made available;
- The appeal or complaint is allocated to an Appeal Manager, the appeal is acknowledged and the details of the Appeal Manager are provided to the applicant;
- The Appeal Manager reviews the case to understand the nature of the appeal or complaint, reviews the actions and decisions taken in connection with the original case and takes account of any new information that may have been received. This will typically require contact with those persons involved in the original case and consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and with the CAA Legal Department, agrees on the course of action to be taken;
- The Appeal Manager prepares the necessary response and collates any information to be provided to the applicant;
- The response and any necessary information is sent to the applicant, together with information about further rights of appeal to the Information Commissioners Office, including full contact details.