

18 February 2014  
FOIA reference: F0001794

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent request of 21 January 2014, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

*"I would like to know how close two planes flying separate paths would have to be to require the Civil Aviation Authority to investigate. I would like the guidelines surrounding a situation like this and what would happen if a situation such as this occurred.*

*Furthermore, I would like to find out how many times this situation has occurred on an annual basis for the last three calendar years".*

Our response:

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

There is not a simple distance criteria which determines the investigation of a loss of separation, and separation requirements vary in different areas of airspace.

Within UK regulated airspace, the separation requirements, laterally and vertically, are dependent on a range of factors which include the airspace classification, the availability of service providers, the capability of the equipment used and the qualifications of each Air Navigation Service Provider's air traffic controllers.

More information about loss of separation can be found in the information sheet on the CAA's website at <http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/7/EIS%2009.pdf>.

However, incidents involving a loss of required separation are required to be reported to the CAA under the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) scheme. All instances involving a conflict where a pilot or air traffic controller considers safety may have been compromised, are required to be reported. These conflicts are referred to as Airprox and are investigated

**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](mailto:rick.chatfield@caa.co.uk)

by an independent specialist team that has access to all the relevant data such as recorded radar and voice communications.

The independent UK Airprox Board ensures appropriate consideration of Airprox occurrences by a panel of aviation experts to ensure validity of the assessment process and that lessons learned are actioned appropriately. The Board regularly makes recommendations for the review or adjustment of regulations and procedures where this is considered necessary and more information and statistics can be found on the Board's website at <http://www.airproxboard.org.uk>

The number of Airprox reports received under the MOR scheme in the last three year is:

2011-148  
2012-137  
2013-153

These reports include all types of aircraft ranging from recreational flying (such as microlights) to commercial airliners but exclude any Airprox incidents involving two military aircraft, which are not recorded by the CAA.

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  
Information Rights and Enquiries Officer

## **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.