

[REDACTED]

Date: 21 October 2025
Reference: F0007628

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request of 1 October 2025, for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). For reference your original enquiry was as follows:

- 1. Internal reports, correspondence, or decision-making documents relating to the grounding of the Boeing 737 MAX in UK airspace between October 2018 and December 2020.*
- 2. Any assessments, safety analyses, or communications with Boeing regarding the return to service of the Boeing 737 MAX.*

If full disclosure is not possible, I would appreciate any summaries, redacted versions, or guidance on how to access the available material.

Your request has been considered in line with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Please note this response should be taken as the CAA's comprehensive response and the reply dated 7 October 2025 stating the CAA holds no relevant information should be disregarded.

It has been estimated by the CAA that to fully satisfy this information request would exceed the appropriate limit as set out at section 12 (appropriate limit) of the FOIA. Your request, therefore, is being refused at this time by way of section 12 (appropriate limit) of the FOIA. by the CAA.

Under section 12 (appropriate limit) of the FOIA, public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would likely exceed the "appropriate limit". The "appropriate limit" for the purposes of section 12 of the FOIA has been set at £450, which equates to 18 hours of staff time, for non-central government public authorities.

It has been estimated that to fully satisfy your request would require a manual review of held information to fully locate potentially held in-scope information or definitively confirm information is not held.

Initial investigations have located some 1032 emails potentially in-scope from only one potential mailbox within a subfolder entitled 737-8 Ground (there are likely to be several other mailboxes containing in-scope information).

[REDACTED]

If this one mailbox source is taken into consideration then it has been estimated that, on average, each would require 3 minutes to open, review (including attachments), and decide if within scope or not. This therefore equates to 1032 x 3mins / 60mins = 51 hours. It is this lengthy review, in terms of both the requested historical date range and volume of potential information, which has been estimated by the CAA, would likely exceed the above-mentioned appropriate limit.

Potential research

i. As previously mentioned you may, if you have not already done so, wish to contact European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The UK was, at the time, a member of EASA, their records may better reflect your area of study. As a separate and unique organisation I am unsure as to what, if any, information they would hold or be in a position to release to you.

EASA | European Union Aviation Safety Agency

ii. My colleagues in Flight Operations and Design and Certification Team have suggested that they would be willing to discuss your research project outside the remit of the FOIA to aid your academic studies. Should you wish to contact them direct to discuss this possibility please use the following contact details:

fo.standards@caa.co.uk

Advice and assistance

As your request is already focused and specific, in it is difficult, at this stage, for us to be able to offer any advice or assistance (as required by section 16 of the FOIA) to you as to how to narrow your request under the above-mentioned appropriate limit.

It maybe help if you are able to narrow the scope of your request down and indicate the type of information you are interested in.

It should be noted that if you did re-submit a reframed question there is still the possibility that this refined request could also be subject to the application of the section 12 provisions (or in-deed any of the other in-build FOIA exemptions). If this is the case, then of course we will endeavour to continue to assist you as much as possible in order to bring your request under the appropriate limit.

If you do re-submit a request it will be handled as a new request under the appropriate legislation.

For further information on the section 12 (appropriate limit) exemption under the terms of the FOIA please visit the website of the independent regulators, the Information Commissioner's Office: Section 12 guidance notes.

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:-

FOI.Requests@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 out below. A request for an internal review should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

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

Information Commissioner's Office
FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF
<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at FOI - Freedom of Information (caa.co.uk).

Yours sincerely

Communications & Engagement Team
Information Rights Specialist
Civil Aviation Authority

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At the CAA we respect agile working so, while it suits me to send this now, I do not expect a response or action outside of your own working hours.

Please consider our environment. Think before printing.

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.
- 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 when necessary consultation with the CAA Legal Department;
- The Appeal Manager concludes the review and, after consultation with those involved with the case, and if necessary 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.
- An internal review cannot address issues outside of the scope of the original request.
- You, as the applicant, may raise concerns as to why you think the CAA (and any exemptions relied upon) were incorrect in our application of the terms of the FOIA.
- The internal review mechanism should not be used to raise additional further requests for information; this should be done by way of another first stage information request.