

22 October 2015
Reference: F0002493

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent request of 28 September 2015 for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request:

1. *How many UAVs have been approved for police use?*
2. *Which forces have been permitted to use UAVs?*
3. *The number of times a member of the public has been a) arrested, b) charged and c) convicted of a crime in relation their use of a UAV.*

I further request that Questions 1 and 3 be broken down by force. Additionally I request that Question 3 is further broken down by crime type.

Our response:

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

Permissions

Permissions are not granted for each individual UAV. The current system grants permission to an operator to fly any UAV (small unmanned aircraft (SUA)/small unmanned surveillance aircraft (SUSA)) not exceeding 20kg in weight) within a specific 'class'. There are two aircraft 'classes' allowed under the permission system, which is aligned to the requirements in Articles 166 and 167 of the Air Navigation Order 2009 (ANO) :

- (a) SUA/SUSA not exceeding 7kg Maximum Take-Off Mass (MTOM).
- (b) SUA/SUSA of MTOM 7-20kg.

The police (and all civil users) are no longer required to state the exact 'type' of aircraft (make and model), however all of the small unmanned aircraft operated under police permissions are of the multicopter or landplane type, not exceeding 7kg.

There are currently four police forces with an annual CAA permission to operate SUA/SUSA:

Civil Aviation Authority

Aviation House Gatwick Airport South Gatwick RH6 0YR. www.caa.co.uk

Telephone: 01293 768512. foi.requests@caa.co.uk

- (a) Sussex Police
- (b) Staffordshire Police
- (c) The Police Services of Northern Ireland
- (d) Devon and Cornwall Police

It should be noted that the police may engage a commercial (CAA permission-holding) operator to carry out work on their behalf. These operators must fly within the limits of their CAA permission.

For your information, we publish a list of current permission holders on our website at www.caa.co.uk/uas; the link to the list can be found at the bottom of that page.

Police use of SUA/SUSA is not classified as 'aerial work', so it may be that other forces are using SUA/SUSA but within the more limited scope that is allowed under ANO Articles 166 and 167 without requiring permission from the CAA.

Offences

Two CAA investigations have resulted in prosecutions for breaches of aviation legislation related to the operation of UAVs.

1. Flying a SUSA within 50 metres of a structure (Article 167 of the ANO) & flying over a Nuclear Installation (Regulation 3(2) of the Air Navigation (Restriction Of Flying)(Nuclear Installations) Regulations 2007).
2. Not maintaining direct unaided visual contact with a SUA (Article 166(3) of the ANO) and flying a SUSA over or within 150 metres of a congested area (Article 167(1) and 167(2)(a) of the ANO).

Since April this year, the police have responsibility for leading enforcement of regulations relating to UAVs and matters of public nuisance. Other prosecutions have resulted from police investigations, including two this year led by the Metropolitan Police with CAA assistance. However, we do not hold further information on these cases or any other action that may have been taken by the police.

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:-

Caroline Chalk
Head of External Information Services
Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Gatwick Airport South
Gatwick
RH6 0YR

caroline.chalk@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 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
www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx

If you wish to request further information from the CAA, please use the form on the CAA website at <http://www.caa.co.uk/application.aspx?catid=286&pagetype=65&appid=24>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Stevens'.

Mark Stevens
External Response 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.