

22 October 2015
Reference: F0002495

Dear XXXX

I am writing in respect of your recent request of 29 September 2015 for the release of information held by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

Your request was whether any of a number of named police forces has applied for permission from the CAA to operate a Small Unmanned Surveillance Aircraft under Article 167 of the Air Navigation Order 2009 (ANO) in the last five years.

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.

The following police forces have applied for, and received, a permission from the CAA during the last five years (the permission combines ANO Articles 166 and 167):

Cumbria Police (a temporary rather than annual permission)
Devon and Cornwall Police
Essex Police
Merseyside Police
Police Service of Northern Ireland
Staffordshire Police
Sussex Police

Of these, the following four forces hold a current annual CAA permission:

Devon and Cornwall Police
Police Service of Northern Ireland
Staffordshire Police
Sussex Police

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.

The current system grants permission to an operator to fly any drone (small unmanned aircraft (SUA)/small unmanned surveillance aircraft (SUSA)) not exceeding 20kg in weight)

Civil Aviation Authority

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

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

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 ANO:

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

Under the 'class' system, 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 multirotor or landplane type, not exceeding 7kg. It should be noted that the police may engage a commercial (CAA permission-holding) drone operator to carry out work on their behalf. These operators must fly within the limits of their CAA permission.

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.

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.