



Home Office

Direct Communications Unit  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Tel: [REDACTED]  
Fax: [REDACTED]  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

[REDACTED]

Morgane

Reference: T2346/13

5 March 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your e-mail of 13 February about police actions in situations of public demonstration, assembly or protest. Your e-mail has been passed to the Direct Communications Unit and I have been asked to reply.

It is not clear from your request what recorded information it is that you are seeking. As such we cannot consider your letter of 13 February to be a valid Freedom of Information (FOI) request. FOI legislation provides the public with two rights; to be informed whether recorded information is held, and if so, to have that information provided to them, unless it is otherwise considered to be exempt:

- You can ask for any information you think a public authority may hold. The right only covers recorded information which includes information held on computers, in e-mails and in printed or handwritten documents as well as images, video and audio recordings;
- You should identify the information you want as clearly as possible; and
- Your request can be in the form of a question, rather than a request for specific documents, but the authority does not have to answer your question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgment that is not already recorded.

However, the information provided below may be of further use to you.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has published uniformed operations guidance which is publically available at:

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/ProfessionalPractice/UniformedOperations.aspx>.

You have asked what legislation governs the use of equipment at the disposal of police forces in protest situations. The answer to this can be found on the Home Office Code of Practice on the Police Use of Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons at:

<http://tna.europarchive.org/20100419081706/http://www.police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/operational-policing/useoffirearms.html>.

You have asked what types of equipment police forces are permitted to use in protest situations, for example: batons, shields, water cannons and rubber bullets. The ACPO Manual of Guidance on the Management, Command and Deployment of Armed Officers lists the types of equipment permitted, this can be found at:

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/uniformed/2011/201111MCDofAO3.pdf>.

For all the equipment types available for use by police officers in situations of protest that are supplementary to normal police equipment, please provide me with data including:

- The number of items in the possession of police forces for each equipment type; and
- The amount of times that such equipment types have been used in the last five years.

You will need to contact individual police forces concerned, as it is for Chief Constables to decide what equipment is used operationally.

You have asked what guidance and training are police provided with on the use of equipment for dealing with protest. The ACPO Manual of Guidance on Keeping the Peace lists the training methods police are provided with on use of equipment for protests can be found at:

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/uniformed/2010/201010UNKTP01.pdf>.

You have asked whether the police or Government compiled any evaluation reports on the policing of protests in the past five years. There have been a number of reviews which were carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) below and these can all be found on the HMIC website at <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/>:

- Adapting to Protest – July 2009;
- Adapting to Protest on Private Land – June 2009;
- Adapting to Protest – use of the public highway – November 2009;
- Adapting to Protest – nurturing the British model of policing – November 2009;
- Policing Public Order – February 2011;
- Public Order Policing Review ToR – September 2011; and
- The Rules of Engagement: A review of the August 2011 disorders – December 2011.

The Metropolitan Police Service reviews into the August 2011 riots (which can be accessed on the Metropolitan Police website - <http://content.met.police.uk/Home>) are listed below:

- Operation Kirkin Interim Report:  
<http://content.met.police.uk/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheadname1=Content-Type&blobheadname2=Content-Disposition&blobheadvalue1=application%2Fpdf&blobheadvalue2=inline%3B+filename%3D%221006%2F646%2FCO553-11InterimreportKirkin.pdf%22&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1283535860204&ssbinary=true>; and
- 4 days in August:  
<http://content.met.police.uk/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheadname1=Content-Type&blobheadname2=Content-Disposition&blobheadvalue1=application%2Fpdf&blobheadvalue2=inline%3B+filename%3D%221006%2F646%2FCO553-11InterimreportKirkin.pdf%22&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1283535860204&ssbinary=true>

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I hope that this is helpful.

Yours faithfully

K Robinson  
**Direct Communications Unit**

E-mail [REDACTED]