



Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

13 June 2023

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service FOI 2292/23 - Vehicle Fires

Request:

I would like to request under the Freedom of Information Act data held by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service on vehicle fires attended by your emergency crews for the financial years 2017-18 to 2022-23 inclusive.

The information I am seeking relates directly to vehicles which have caught fire either while parked or while in use. An example would be a car which catches fire while parked outside a house or a car which catches fire while driving along the road.

I am not looking for information on vehicles which have been deliberately set alight or that have caught fire after being involved in a road traffic collision.

I would like information held by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service broken down into the following categories:

1. Type/Class of vehicle (such as Car/SUV/MPV/Van/HGV)
2. Make: (Such as Ford/Vauxhall/Mercedes/LandRover)
3. Model: (Such as Mondeo/Corsa/E-Class/Discovery)
4. Fuel: (Such as Petrol/Diesel/LPG/Hydrogen/Hybrid/Electric)
5. I would also like information as to whether the vehicle fire caused any casualties / fatalities or caused damage to other vehicles / buildings.

Response:

Your request for information has now been considered. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service cannot supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt within the provisions of the Act) to provide you, the applicant, with a notice which:

- a) states the fact,

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- b) specifies the exemption in question and
- c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

Section 12(1) - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

Section 12 of the FOIA provides an exemption from a public authority's obligation to comply with a request for information where the cost of compliance is estimated to exceed the appropriate limit.

The information you are requesting in relation to the make or model of vehicle, or type of fuel involved in fires dealt with by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is not held by NFRS in any reasonably retrievable form. The only means of establishing information of the nature you are requesting would be by way of manual examination of all Primary Fires - Accidental by vehicle type.

It is my assessment that the cost of providing you with the information requested would exceed the 'appropriate level' as set out in the Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 which is currently £450 for 'prescribed costs'. It would cost 966 (number of records) x 5 minutes each (minimum) = over 160 hours at £25 per hour to respond to your request.

By way of explanation, every effort is made to ensure that responses to Freedom of Information requests provide accurate and complete data. Unfortunately, in relation to this request, our data is not organised in such a way as to allow us to provide this information. NFRS do not routinely record the make or model of vehicle, or type of fuel involved, nor do NFRS record if the initial fire spread to other vehicles or buildings. The make/model/fuel type of a vehicle may be detailed in further investigation logs, and the extent of a fire is measured in meters squared; on occasion, there may be information about spread to nearby buildings or another vehicle, but this is not mandatory nor is it routinely recorded. All of this information would require a physical read of any available fire investigation logs.

In view of the above, and in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please take this letter as a Refusal Notice.

You may wish to refine and resubmit your request so that it reduces the costs shown above and is then within the 'appropriate limit' shown above. This may be, for example, by reducing the time





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scales or selecting a sample range for each year; if you would like some further information about how to proceed with your request then please contact

FreedomofInformation@northants.pnn.police.uk

Although excess cost removes NFRS's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of the request.

Searches have been conducted in relation to your request, and I can confirm that the following information is held.

Please note - NFRS do not routinely record the make, model or type of fuel involved, unless this was a contributory factor (please see 'Main Cause' below), nor do they record if the initial fire spread to other vehicles or buildings, please see the full explanation above.

Primary Fires - Accidental by Vehicle Type: Type of vehicle and main cause, broken down by Financial Year:

Bus/coach	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Fault in equipment or appliance		1				
Faulty fuel supply - electricity		1	1			
Other					1	
Overheating, unknown cause	1					1
Car	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
(Blank)	1	3	1	2		1
Accumulation of flammable material	1	4				1
Bonfire going out of control						1
Careless handling - due to careless disposal	2		2	1		1
Careless handling - due to knocking over			1			
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)	7	3	7	5	3	2

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Fault in equipment or appliance	12	15	21	22	16	26
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	31	26	25	20	24	18
Faulty fuel supply - petrol product	9	8	12	5	5	6
Faulty leads to equipment or appliance	4	10	5	2	2	6
Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source)					1	1
Other	15	18	15	13	13	17
Other intentional burning, going out of control			1			
Overheating, unknown cause	17	17	23	19	16	27
Playing with fire (or heat source)		3	1			
Vehicle crash or collision	5	4	5	3	5	3
Lorry/HGV	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
(Blank)	1					
Accumulation of flammable material		1	4	1	2	
Careless handling - due to careless disposal	3	1	1	3	2	1
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)		1		2		
Fault in equipment or appliance	2	2		3	2	3
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	6	1	2			
Faulty fuel supply - petrol product		2	1		1	
Natural occurrence	1	1				
Other	6	2	6	6	9	3
Overheating, unknown cause	8	6	6	6	4	12
Minibus	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Fault in equipment or appliance			1			
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	1	1				
Other		1				2





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Motor Home	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
(Blank)					1	
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)	1					1
Fault in equipment or appliance		1	1			1
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	1			1	2	
Faulty fuel supply - gas					1	
Faulty fuel supply - petrol product		1		1		1
Other		1		1		
Overheating, unknown cause				2		
Motorcycle	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
(Blank)						1
Accumulation of flammable material			1			
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)		1				
Fault in equipment or appliance	1	1	1		1	
Faulty fuel supply - petrol product	1	2	1			
Natural occurrence				1		
Other		1			1	1
Overheating, unknown cause			1		1	
Vehicle crash or collision			2			
Multiple Vehicles	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Accumulation of flammable material					1	
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)				1		
Fault in equipment or appliance	1	1	1	1		
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	3		2	1	2	2
Faulty fuel supply - petrol product		1				





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Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source)						1
Other	2	2		1		
Overheating, unknown cause					1	
Vehicle crash or collision	1					2
Other	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Accumulation of flammable material	1	2			2	1
Careless handling - due to careless disposal		1		1		
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)	1					
Fault in equipment or appliance	4			2	2	
Faulty fuel supply - electricity			1	3	1	2
Faulty fuel supply - gas					1	
Faulty fuel supply - petrol product						1
Faulty leads to equipment or appliance			1			1
Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source)						1
Other		3			2	1
Overheating, unknown cause	2	1	1			
Tanker	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Other					1	
Overheating, unknown cause		1				
Van	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
(Blank)		1				
Accumulation of flammable material	1		1			1
Careless handling - due to careless disposal						1
Careless handling - due to knocking over		1			2	





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Careless handling - due to sleep or unconsciousness					1	
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)	4		2	1	1	
Fault in equipment or appliance	4	2	2	1	2	4
Faulty fuel supply - electricity	6	4	1	4	1	3
Faulty fuel supply - petrol product		2		1		1
Faulty leads to equipment or appliance		2		2		
Natural occurrence	1					
Negligent use of equipment or appliance (heat source)					1	
Other		2	5	2	4	1
Other intentional burning, going out of control	1					
Overheating, unknown cause	2	2	4		9	10
Vehicle crash or collision					1	
Grand Total	171	168	169	140	148	170

Number of fatalities by vehicle type:

Vehicle Type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Car					1	
Motor Home				1		
Motorcycle			1			
Van					1	
Total	0	0	1	1	2	0

Number of injuries by vehicle type:

Vehicle Type	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Car	3	2	2	5	2	3
Lorry/HGV				1		

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Motor Home						1
Motorcycle			1			
Multiple Vehicles	1					2
Other						2
Van						
Total	4	2	3	6	2	8

The numerical data presented in this response is an un-audited snapshot of un-published data sourced from "live" systems and is subject to the interpretation of the original request by the individual extracting the data. The figures provided therefore are our best interpretation of relevance of data to your request, but you should be aware that the collation of figures for ad hoc requests may have limitations and this should be taken into account when the data is used.

Due to the different methods of recording information across fire services, a specific response from one service should not be seen as an indication of what information could be supplied (within cost) by another. Systems used for recording these figures are not generic, nor are the procedures used locally in capturing the data. For this reason responses between services may differ, and should not be used for comparative purposes.

If you decide to write an article / use the enclosed data we would ask you to take into consideration the factors highlighted in this document so as to not mislead members of the public or official bodies, or misrepresent the relevance of the whole or any part of this disclosed material.

APPEAL RIGHTS

If you are unhappy with how your request has been handled or you do not think the decision is correct, you have the right to ask for a review of the decision.

Prior to lodging a formal appeal you are welcome and encouraged to discuss the decision with the case officer that dealt with your request.

Ask to have the decision looked at again

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The quickest and easiest way to have the decision looked at again is to telephone the case officer. That person will be able to discuss the decision, explain any issues and assist with any problems.

Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the handling procedures or the decision that the Service have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) regarding access to information, you can lodge an appeal to have the decision reviewed.

Appeals should be made in writing within 20 days of receipt of your reply and either emailed to freedomofinformation@northants.police.uk or addressed to:

**Freedom of Information Manager
Information Unit
Northamptonshire Police Headquarters
Wootton Hall
Northampton
NN4 0JQ**

Where possible the Service will aim to respond to your appeal within 20 working days. However meeting this time scale will depend upon the circumstances and complexity of the issue.

The Information Commissioner

After lodging an appeal with the Service, if you are still dissatisfied with the decision, you may make an application to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

For information on how to make an application to the Information Commissioner please visit their website at www.ico.org.uk Alternatively, telephone or write to:

**Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF**

Phone: 0303 123 1113

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