



9 July 2026

Request:

Please provide the following information for each of the last five calendar years: 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

The number of fire incidents attended by your service where a vape, e-cigarette, disposable vape, or vape battery was recorded as the suspected or confirmed cause of fire.

Please include incidents identified through any relevant cause, ignition source, item first ignited, incident notes, or recorded free-text fields.

For each year, please provide the number of these incidents involving:
discarded disposable vapes
waste, bins, refuse vehicles, recycling centres, landfill, transfer stations, or waste facilities

For each year, please provide the total number of fire engines or other fire service vehicles sent to these incidents.

For each year, please provide the total number of firefighter hours spent attending these incidents.

For each year, please provide the estimated cost of attending these incidents.

If incident-level cost data is not held, please provide any standard call-out cost, appliance cost, hourly firefighter cost, or internal costing formula used by your service.

Response:

Your request has now been considered, and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) are not obliged to provide the information that you have requested by virtue of the following exemption:

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

Although the information may be held for 26-37054, there is no facility to determine the scope of information held, locate and retrieve it. To access and retrieve accurate data would require a manual review of each fire incident record. Our information retrieval process generally relies on a computer-run report which captures any information recorded upon the surface of a record or within specified fields. Where relevant information is held deeper in the record, or outside of a specified field, a manual assessment is usually required to retrieve that information.

By way of further explanation, as a new technology, vapes, e-cigarettes, disposable vapes, or vape batteries are not classified as a fire ignition source in the Incident Recording System. A manual review of the free text of each fire incident record would be required to determine whether those technologies were the source of ignition or involved in the fire incidents.

It is our assessment that the cost of providing you with the information requested would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as set out in the Freedom of Information (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. The appropriate limit is currently £450, which is the equivalent of 18 hours at £25 per hour.

For the period 2021 to 2025 there are 9304 records that require a manual review. At a conservative estimate of 3 minutes per record review, this equals approximately 465 hours. At £25 per hour this equals a cost of £11,625 to respond to your request. This exceeds the appropriate limit.

Where section 12 applies to a request, it should apply to the whole request, even where only one question would supersede the cost limit. The guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office is that the decision on what is important is a matter for the requester and it is not for a public authority to assume what information the requestor would like to receive inside the cost limit.

To fulfil the NFRS's Section 16 obligations, a public authority is obliged to provide advice and assistance to requesters in relation to making an FOI request. By refining and narrowing the scope of your request, it may be possible to bring it within the appropriate cost limit and enable disclosure of information most relevant to your interests. This could be achieved by requesting a more limited number of cases, to a maximum of 20 randomly selected records, which may be reviewed to determine whether any relevant information is contained within. However, until a refined request is received and considered, we are unable to confirm whether or not that request would also be an over cost.

You should also note that had Section 12 – Requests where the cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit not been applicable, other exemptions would have been considered and applied where relevant and this may also be the case if a resubmission is made.

If you would like some further information about how to proceed with your request then please contact: freedomofinformation@northants.police.uk

Caveats:

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service systems are designed primarily for the management of individual cases and not for the production of statistical information for Freedom of Information responses.

If you decide to write an article/use the enclosed data, we 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

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 with the Service 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

Darby House

Darby Close

Park Farm Industrial Estate

Wellingborough

NN8 6GS

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