| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-0392  Responded to: 3 March 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## I am writing to inquire about the radio communication codes used by Police Scotland, as I have a keen interest in understanding the terminology and procedures utilized in police operations. I am particularly interested in any publicly available information or general guidance that you may be able to provide regarding the communication protocols used by officers in the field.

The information requested by you is considered to be exempt in terms of the Freedom of   
Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (the Act).  Section 16 of the Act requires Police Scotland   
to provide you with a notice which: (a) states that it holds the information, (b) states that it   
is claiming an exemption, (c) specifies the exemption in question and (d) states, if that   
would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies. Where information is   
considered to be exempt, this letter serves as a RefusalNotice that information is held and   
an explanation of the appropriate exemptions is provided.

**Section 35 (1) (a) & (b) – Law Enforcement**The information is considered to be exempt, as its disclosure would or would be likely to   
prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or   
prosecution of offenders.     
Release of the requested information could be used by individuals intent on wrong doing to evade detection, as it would enable targeted individuals or groups to become aware of how all UK police forces and emergency services communicate amongst their own Force area/or other police forces.     
 As such, disclosure would have an adverse impact on the ability of the Police to carry out   
its law enforcement role effectively, and thereby prejudice substantially the prevention and   
detection of crime.     
This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.  

**Section 31 (1) – National Security and Defence**This information, if disclosed, may assist terrorist organisations with a tactical advantage   
when planning or perpetrating their terrorist plans and activities and cause the maximum   
impact of destruction and disruption.    
The security of the United Kingdom is of paramount importance and Police Scotland will   
not disclose further details of such information if it would impact on national security, law   
enforcement and the health and safety of the community.    
This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.

Section 39 (1) – Health, Safety and the Environment    
As previously described, release of the requested information could be used by

individuals intent on wrong doing to evade detection, as

it would enable targeted individualsor groups to become aware of how all UK police forces and emergency services communicate amongst their own Force area/or other police forces.     
 It could also place curious members of the public in danger if they were aware of the radio codes and they make the decision to attend the locus out of curiosity.  Whilst an incident   
can be reported in the first instance as something minor, it is a fact that incidents can   
escalate fairly quickly to something major.  Whilst police are trying to divert the public away from the incident those curious membersof the publimay attend the area, which

would not only compromise their own safety but also that of the operational officers, for example, a suspect package may turn out to be a bomb call and not a hoax.   
This ability would leave both police officers and members of the public at risk from injury   
and as such Police Scotland cannot release information which would be detrimental to the   
safety of the public. In this instance disclosure would, or would be likely to, endanger the   
physical or mental health or the safety of an individual.    
This is a non-absolute exemption and requires the application of the public interest test.    
   
Public Interest Test    
   
The exemptions listed above are non-absolute and require the application of the   
Public Interest Test.

I can find no reason why the disclosure of the information would be in   
the Public Interest and it is not information that would assist a member of the public to their benefit.  It should be acknowledged that the Public Interest does not mean of general interest to someone, it means that it has to benefit the wider community.   
The Police Service needs to consider the impact of the release of this information into the   
public domain and I would argue that the need to ensure the efficient and effective conduct   
of the service in a key law enforcement role, the interests of third parties and the   
preservation of public and officer safety favours non-disclosure of the information   
requested.   
   
Further, the United Kingdom currently faces a sustained threat from violent terrorists and   
extremists. The current threat level for international terrorism for the UK is assessed as   
‘substantial’. I appreciate that on the face of it yourrequest may seem particularly

harmless however, as you can appreciate a response under the Act is a public disclosure.    
In conclusion, it is considered that the public interest in disclosing the information   
requested by you is outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption as   
detailed above.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.