| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-0237  Responded to: 23 February 2024 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## How many Airwave/ESN radios and terminals are operated by your organisation?

## What make(s)/models of Airwave/ESN radio terminals are used by your organisation? Please provide a breakdown of these by quantity, type and model if possible.

## In the last 12 months, how many Airwave/ESN radio terminals have been lost/stolen or cannot be located?

## Are Airwave/ESN radio terminal users allocated on a personal basis, and if so, what is your policy on use off duty and taking home of radio terminals and their use by staff working from home?

## Please provide a list of Airwave/ESN radio terminal talk groups your organisation uses and any interoperability talk groups shared by other users.

## Please provide a copy of any policy or training information provided by your organisation to support your users of Airwave/ESN radio terminals and talkgroups.

## What organisations/groups within your organisation have been allocated or granted access to Airwave/ESN radio terminals?

## Do you loan or otherwise provide Airwave/ESN radio terminals to any third parties, and if so, please could you provide detailed information on the arrangements and policy in this respect used by your organisation?

In terms of section 16 of the Act, I am refusing to provide you with the information requested.

Section 16 requires Police Scotland to:

(a) state that it holds the information,   
(b) state that it is claiming an exemption,   
(c) specify the exemption in question and   
(d) state, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

I can confirm that the information requested is held by Police Scotland and the exemption(s) that I consider to be applicable are set out below:

## Section 35(1)(a)&(b) - Law enforcement

The information requested is exempt, as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Placing this level of detail in the public domain would allow those intent on committing crime or causing disorder to gauge the likelihood of detection or to take measures to negate the likelihood of detection. It would allow criminals to plan how best to disrupt the communications between police and / or other emergency services and therefore maximise their chances of committing serious crime, harming the efficient and effective conduct of the service.

Such information would prove extremely useful information for persons involved in criminality as they would be able to plan and conduct their activities to avoid detection.

In turn this would prejudice substantially the ability for our officers to prevent and detect crime and apprehend or prosecute offenders.

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.

## Section 39(1) - Health, safety and the environment

Any tactical advantage to criminals and those intent on wrongdoing would assist them in circumventing the efficient and effective provision of law enforcement by the police service, which in turn would have an adverse impact on the safety of the officers involved and the general public. The ability to interrupt key communications would increase the risk to the personal safety of individuals and also the safety of the police officers responding to incidents.

## Section 30(c) - Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.

The use of Airwave equipment and the network is a key operational function both within the police and other emergency services. All users must successfully complete the appropriate Airwave training course before being authorised to access the Airwave system and are issued with a personal hand held terminal / pool terminal and ancillary equipment specific to their role.

In that sense, it is not appropriate for training materials to be made publicly available.

This is a key factor in reaching a decision on disclosure but it is not the only factor.

Police Scotland has a responsibility to its partner agencies, its staff and the wider public that any decisions regarding placing information in the public domain are taken in an appropriate, considered and fair way and there is no reasonable expectation that operational training materials will be made public - particularly in circumstances where this may impact on our ability to provide emergency services.

I have included a link below where you can access information under the heading ‘Airwave national Guidance’:

[Guidance Documents A-B - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/policies-and-procedures/guidance-documents/guidance-documents-a-b/)

Please be aware that this document has had large amounts of information removed in accordance with the Act (noted where relevant), specifically Sections 25, 30(c), 35(1)(a)&(b), and 39(1).

## What is the annual operating cost to your organisation for access and use of Airwave/ESN radio communications networks?

The annual budget for Airwave is in the region of £5-7m per annum.

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](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) 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.