



Your reference:

Our reference: FOI_2023.0955

E-mail: FOI

@gloucestershire.police.uk

Direct dial: 01452 754304

Postal Address: As above

Date: 25/10/2023

Dear

Gloucestershire Constabulary Freedom of Information request 2023.0955

On 28/09/2023 you sent an email constituting a request under the Freedom of Information Act asking the following:

I am writing to request information about

1. Any guidelines or standards your force uses when communicating about road traffic collisions. These guidelines may relate to the language used when staff write press releases, or speak about traffic crashes to the press and public, defining any terms to avoid or to include when doing so. Please include such guidelines or standards in your reply.
2. Whether use of these guidelines is mandatory in communications, say, with the public and press. If not, please explain on what basis they are applied.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 s1, I can confirm that Gloucestershire Constabulary holds some relevant information.

Following receipt of your request, enquiries have been made with the relevant department who have provided the following response –

In relation to collisions, we issue proactive press releases or social media posts either to inform the public of disruption to the roads or to appeal for witnesses to come forward to help our investigations. Sometimes media ask questions about collisions we have not publicised, and as a public service we may have to disclose information to those reporters in response to their questions.

Early on following a crash, prior to next of kin being told, we will be limited with the amount of information we disclose about the vehicles and people involved to avoid the possibility of anyone being identified.

Once next of kin have been informed, we are likely to disclose the rough age and sex of anyone seriously injured or killed in the incident. If they are seriously injured we will explain the current injury status in broad terms (for instance "serious but stable") and which hospital they have been taken to. We do not disclose names of anyone involved unless, in the event someone has died, the family wishes to issue a tribute. Otherwise we will refer any journalists who ask to the coroner's office.

If someone has been arrested in connection with a collision we will release this unless there is a strong operational reason not to do so. It is important the media are alerted to arrests in order for them to be aware the case is active and to ensure they write their report in a non-prejudicial way. This is in line with College of Policing guidelines on police-media relations.

If you are not satisfied with this response or any actions taken in dealing with your request, you have the right to ask that we review your case under our internal procedure. Please note that a request for an internal review must be made within 20 working days of the response to your original request.

If you decide to request that such a review is undertaken and following this process you are still unsatisfied, you then have the right to direct your complaint to the Information Commissioner for consideration.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following means:

Website - <https://ico.org.uk/>

Call their helpline - 0303 123 1113

Email - casework@ico.org.uk

Post –

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

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure Officer
Gloucestershire Constabulary