



Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

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Our Ref: IU/ FOI 116-23-24

20 December 2023

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Dear

Please be advised when you write to us asking for information the Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you two rights of access. You have the right to know whether we hold recorded information falling in scope of your request, and you have the right to receive this recorded information subject to cost limit or exemption. NIFRS has considered your request in line with these obligations, and your response is outlined below.

Q1. How many fires have your Service attended which involved electric or Hybrid vehicles powered by lithium-ion batteries between the following dates 1/1/21 – 1/11/23?

Q2. Of these fires attended in how many of these was the cause recorded as a fault on the lithium-ion battery?

Q3. Of the fires attended how many involved the lithium battery cells?

Response to Q1–Q3:

As there is limited information recorded on lithium batteries, a fire in an electric car or hybrid car is treated as a lithium ion battery fire as is a lithium ion battery fire in a car.

Table 1 gives a breakdown of fires in electric or hybrid cars that occurred between 01 January 2021 and 01 November 2023.

Table 1

Fires in Electric or Hybrid Cars				
Vehicle	2021	2022	2023	Total
ELECTRIC CAR	0	0	4	4
HYBRID CAR	0	1	0	1
CAR	0	1	0	1
Total	0	2	4	6

Table 2 gives a breakdown of the cause of these fires.

Table 2

Fires in Electric or Hybrid Cars				
Cause of Fires	2021	2022	2023	Total
FIRE – CAUSE UNKNOWN	0	0	2	2
FIRE AS A RESULT OF RTC	0	1	2	3
LITHIUM BATTERY ISOLATED AS A RESULT OF RTC	0	1	0	1
Total	0	2	4	6

There is no information available to indicate that any of these fires involved the lithium battery cells.

Additional incidents may have occurred however limited detail within the recorded data would render these incidents unable to be extracted

Q4. Have your Service developed specific operational procedures for dealing with fires involving lithium-ion batteries?

NIFRS has guidance, for operational personnel, outlining the control measures to be applied and operational tactics for dealing with incidents involving Lithium-Ion batteries.

Q5. Have your service purchased any specific equipment/extinguishing/PPE agents to deal with fires involving lithium-ion batteries?

NIFRS currently have “fire blankets” on trial which are specifically to deal with fires involving lithium-ion batteries in electric vehicles.

Q6. Does your Service provide specific training to operational crews who may be called to fires involving lithium-ion batteries?

NIFRS does not currently provide specific training to operational crews who may be called to fires involving lithium-ion batteries but does provide guidance and operational tactics referred to in Question 4.

Q7. Where lithium-ion batteries are involved in RTA's persons trapped, do you adopt any specific measures to isolate the potential battery ignition risk?

Yes, NIFRS procedures for RTAs include measures for isolating the battery.

Q8. Have your Service initiated any specific information gathering exercise on fires attended involving lithium ion batteries?

Yes, staff from NIFRS Operational Guidance & Policy Department have attended several online National seminars, received input from Translink with regard to Lithium-Ion fuelled buses and from Jaguar/Landrover.

Review Process

Under the terms of the legislation, if you are unhappy with this response you have the right to seek a review within the Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service in the first instance. If you wish to do so, please write to Stuart Crawford the Governance, Information & Business Support Services Manager, 1 Seymour Street, Lisburn, BT27 4SX within two calendar months of the date of this letter.

If after such a review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner who will undertake an independent review.

The Information Commissioner contact details are – 3rd Floor 14 Cromac Place Belfast BT7 2JB.

Please visit www.nifrs.org for more information about NIFRS.

Yours sincerely

Information Unit