

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

**Force Disclosure Unit
Police Headquarters**
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date 5th May 2023

Our Ref FOI 2023-455

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 19th April 2023, concerning Officers and facial hair.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Following receipt of your request, research was conducted by the Force Policy Officer at Wiltshire Police.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am able to respond as follows.

You wrote and our response:

Please note: The answers have been provided in relation to Front Line Operational Officers only and do not include Custody Officers or any specialist Officers (for example, crash investigators).

1. Are front line, operational officers, permitted to wear a beard?

Yes - There is a restriction on Authorised Firearms Officers wearing beards unless this would lead to discrimination against a person with a protected characteristic.

2. Are front line, operational officers, permitted to wear facial hair of any length?

No - Facial hair must be neatly trimmed unless the officer needs to maintain a long beard for diversity reasons.

3. Does your force have any policy regulating the wearing of facial hair?

Yes - Standards of Dress Procedure.

4. Are front line, operational officers, required to wear Respiratory Protective Equipment, specifically FFP3 masks in certain circumstances?

No - The wearing of PPE is based on a risk assessment of the scene and Officers own judgement.

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5. If yes, what are those circumstances?

N/A

6. Do you require front line, operational officers, to be clean shaven when wearing FFP3 masks?

No

7. Do you require front line, operational officers to wear FFP3 masks in any of the following scenarios:

- Dealing with persons known to be positive for COVID-19

Wearing of masks by Front Line Officers and staff is recommended. Officers and staff are encouraged to use their own professional judgement and confidence to keep themselves, their colleagues and the public safe.

- Exposure to blood borne pathogens (via cuts and abrasions in skin); this includes dealing with victims of fatal RTCs

Wearing of masks by Front Line Officers and staff is recommended. The wearing of PPE is based on a risk assessment of the scene and the Officers own judgement.

- Dealing with or examining vehicles where the air bag has been deployed or other man-made fibres such as carbon fibre or similar has been damaged

Wearing of masks by Front Line Officers and staff is recommended. The wearing of PPE is based on a risk assessment of the scene and the Officers own judgement.

- Attendance at ongoing vehicle fires or attendance at / examination of any vehicle that has previously been fire damaged / burnt out

Wearing of masks by Front Line Officers and staff is recommended. The wearing of PPE is based on a risk assessment of the scene and the Officers own judgement.

- Attendance at fires in general

Wearing of masks by Front Line Officers and staff is recommended. The wearing of PPE is based on a risk assessment of the scene and the Officers own judgement.

- Testing of drugs

Yes

8. Did you ever require officers to wear FFP3 masks, for instance during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes

9. If yes, were officers required to be clean shaven when wearing said masks?

No

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Abigail Standidge

Phone: 01722 547081

Email: abigail.standidge@wiltshire.police.uk

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN
Telephone 101



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Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:

Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original Fol request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the ICO's offices will be closed for the foreseeable future and are therefore unable to receive correspondence via post.

If you should wish to contact them, please visit <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

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