

WILTSHIRE POLICE



XXXXXXX
By email

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

Date 6th January 2026

Our Ref FOI 2025-1144

Dear XXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 3rd December 2025, concerning ammunition disposal and registered firearms dealers. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

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, Special Operations and Firearms Licensing Department at Wiltshire Police. Your request for information has now been considered and I am **not** obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

1. Do you have a formal, written policy for the disposal of ammunition (including seized, surrendered, obsolete, and expired stock)? If yes, please provide a copy or summary.
2. Does this policy vary if the ammunition is from force use or if it is surrendered by the public? If yes, please provide a copy or summary.
3. How many officers are involved in the handling and disposal of ammunition?
4. What types of ammunition does your force typically handle for disposal (select all that apply)
 - Small arms
 - Shotgun cartridges
 - Large calibre
 - Pyrotechnics
 - Taser cartridges
 - Other (please specify)
5. Do you keep detailed records of the type, nature, amount, and technical characteristics of all ammunition received for disposal?
6. Please provide figures for the amount and type of ammunition that has been disposed of in the last 3 years, broken down by year.

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7. What are the authorized methods of ammunition disposal used by your department (select all that apply)
- Incineration
 - Controlled detonation
 - Demilitarisation
 - Recycling
 - Open burning
 - Burial
 - Other (please specify)
8. Are these disposal methods carried out internally or by a contracted, registered third party? If contracted please provide details of contractor
9. If using a third party, how do you verify their compliance with safety and environmental regulations?
10. Is recycling of components (e.g., brass casings) part of your disposal process or the responsibility of the person who disposes of the ammunition for you?
11. What specific procedures are in place for the safe disposal of damaged, worn, or potentially unstable ammunition?
12. How does your police force ensure that disposal methods comply with environmental regulations and minimize contamination risks?
13. Who is responsible for overseeing the entire ammunition disposal process, from seizure/surrender to final destruction/disposal and what records are kept for this process?
14. How many registered firearms dealers are registered with your police force?
15. How many dealer registers of firearms or ammunition transactions have you inspected over the last 3 years?
16. How many registered firearms dealers stocks from transactions have you inspected over the last 3 years?
17. Are you aware of how ammunition can be disposed of by registered firearms dealers? (Select all that apply)
- Burial
 - Burning in the open air
 - Recycling
 - Incineration
 - Other (please specify)

Our response:

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at s1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at s1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

Whilst I can confirm Wiltshire Police do hold the requested information, section 12(1) of the FOIA states:-

Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

The information you are requesting - namely in relation to question 6 (amount / type of ammunition disposed of) is not stored in a way which permits for easy retrieval. Providing exact figures relating to the amount and type of ammunition disposed of would require manually reviewing each record for the requested period. If 5 minutes were spent per record, it would take more than 42 hours to complete this task. Although we are unable to provide exact figures relating to the amount of ammunition disposed of, we can provide the number of instances where a *quantity* of ammunition was disposed (see below).

Under the circumstances I am absolutely confident that to locate, retrieve and extract the information you seek would by far exceed the time obligations upon this authority to comply, and in so doing would exceed the fees limits. This is set at £450 calculated at a flat rate of £25 per hour for those work activities comprising of confirming the information is held, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it. Therefore the whole of the request should fall under the exemption of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please note:

If one part of the request engages a Section 12 response, the whole request will engage a Section 12 response. The reason being is due to the fact that locating, retrieving and extracting any further information would only add to the already exceeded time obligations.

Forces may use different recording systems, therefore it may be possible some Forces can provide this information where others cannot.

Ordinarily under our Section 16 obligation to provide advice and assistance we would advise you of a way to refine your request to a more manageable level. Due to the difficulties in obtaining the requested information, as outlined above, I cannot think of a way in which this could be achieved.

Although excess cost removes the Forces' obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, as a gesture of goodwill I have supplied information, relative to your request, retrieved or available before it was realised that the fees limit would be exceeded. I trust this is helpful, but it does not affect our legal right to rely on the fees regulations for the remainder of your request. What I can provide you with is documented below:

1. Do you have a formal, written policy for the disposal of ammunition (including seized, surrendered, obsolete, and expired stock)? If yes, please provide a copy or summary.

The only policy that refers to the disposal of ammunition, to the best of the Force Policy Officer's knowledge, is a section contained within our 'Seizure Storage Retention and Disposal of Evidential Property Policy and Procedure' (extract below).

21.3 Firearms, Ammunition and Pyrotechnics.

Surrendered firearms, ammunition and fireworks together with any firearms, ammunition and fireworks subject to a forfeiture order under the Police (Property) Act 1897 will be forwarded to the Evidential Property Officer for destruction once such destruction is permitted or, where authorised.

- ***Firearms authorised for disposal are to be handed over to a Divisional Armourer as required and are to be destroyed by smelting and witnessed by a Police Officer***

- *Firearms of historic interest will be brought to the attention of the Manager of the Firearms Licensing Department who may dispose of these weapons via a museum or other such organisation*
- *Ammunition authorised for disposal are to be transferred to the possession of the Army Bomb Disposal, RLC, EOD, for disposal*
- *Where items are being destroyed by a third party, a list will be signed by the person taking possession of the property and this list will be retained by the Evidential Property Officer*
- *Storage and disposal of PAVA incapacitant spray will conform to the instructions given in the Force Procedure*
- *Fireworks that are seized will be immediately transferred to Headquarters or enquiry offices that have suitable explosive storage boxes on site to facilitate safe temporary storage*
- *Any seized or surrendered flares must be immediately referred to the Assets Supervisor and placed in explosive storage boxes located as above.*

2. Does this policy vary if the ammunition is from force use or if it is surrendered by the public? If yes, please provide a copy or summary.

See question 1 response.

3. How many officers are involved in the handling and disposal of ammunition?

There are many people involved ranging from the Enquiry Office staff to Armed Officers within the Armed Response department. Property staff will also have input and handle ammunition.

4. What types of ammunition does your force typically handle for disposal (select all that apply)

- Small arms
- Shotgun cartridges
- Large calibre
- Pyrotechnics
- Taser cartridges
- Other (please specify)

As a Force we will deal with all the arms listed, with the exception (in some cases) of large calibre. In this case, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) will need to be called to deal.

5. Do you keep detailed records of the type, nature, amount, and technical characteristics of all ammunition received for disposal?

Yes

6. Please provide figures for the amount and type of ammunition that has been disposed of in the last 3 years, broken down by year.

As per Section 12 response wording, please see below for the number of incidents of a quantity of ammunition being disposed of.

2023/2024 – 189

2024/2025 – 195

2025/2026 (as of Dec 2025) – 131

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7. What are the authorized methods of ammunition disposal used by your department (select all that apply)

- Incineration
- Controlled detonation
- Demilitarisation
- Recycling
- Open burning
- Burial
- Other (please specify)

Other - All ammunition (that has not been returned to owner) go to EOD for disposal.

8. Are these disposal methods carried out internally or by a contracted, registered third party? If contracted please provide details of contractor

EOD. HM Coast Guard currently take flares.

9. If using a third party, how do you verify their compliance with safety and environmental regulations?

EOD will work under their own policies as part of the British Army's Health and Safety.

10. Is recycling of components (e.g., brass casings) part of your disposal process or the responsibility of the person who disposes of the ammunition for you?

All ammunition is handed to EOD for disposal.

11. What specific procedures are in place for the safe disposal of damaged, worn, or potentially unstable ammunition?

As per question 10 response.

12. How does your police force ensure that disposal methods comply with environmental regulations and minimize contamination risks?

As per question 10 response.

13. Who is responsible for overseeing the entire ammunition disposal process, from seizure/surrender to final destruction/disposal and what records are kept for this process?

At the point of seizure this will come under the Specialist Operations umbrella. Armed officers will be involved in seizing ammunition and then booking into the property store. Once in the property store, policies within the Evidential Property Store will apply (and from thereon).

Evidential Property Store currently deal with the disposal of ammunition. They have an EOD unit from the Army that come and collect it.

14. How many registered firearms dealers are registered with your police force?

As of 1st December 2025, we have 76 Registered Firearms Dealers (RFDs).

15. How many dealer registers of firearms or ammunition transactions have you inspected over the last 3 years?

149 - RFDs are inspected every 3 years on renewal applications or initial grants. Where possible we conduct period checks throughout in the 3 year cycle of their certification.

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16. How many registered firearms dealers stocks from transactions have you inspected over the last 3 years?

As per question 15 response.

17. Are you aware of how ammunition can be disposed of by registered firearms dealers?
(Select all that apply)

- Burial
- Burning in the open air
- Recycling
- Incineration
- Other (please specify)

On receipt of ammunition, companies issue a Dangerous Goods Note (DGN) to the RFD. This outlines the dangers associated to the specific ammunition, and what actions need to be taking to legally to dispose of the ammunition. Most RFDs have contracts in place for disposals.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption applicable to the information requested is:

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

In accordance with section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss the withheld information.

Yours sincerely,

FDU Decision Maker

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



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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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