

An Garda Síochána

Oifig Saorála Fáisnéise
An Garda Síochána, Teach áth Luimnigh
Lárionad Gnó Udáras Forbartha Tionscail
Baile Sheáin, An Uaimh
Contae na Mí
C15 DR90



Freedom of Information Office
An Garda Síochána, Athlumney House
IDA Business Park
Johnstown, Navan
Co Meath
C15 DR90

Teileafón/Tel: (046) 9036350

Láithreán Gréasain/Website:

www.garda.ie

Bí linn/Join us



Ríomh-phoist/Email: foi@garda.ie

Ms Ali Bracken

Freedom of Information Request FOI-000178-2017 Request Part Grant

Dear Ms Bracken,

I refer to your request, dated and received on 18th April 2017, which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI Act) for records held by An Garda Síochána.

Part 1(n) of Schedule 1 of the FOI Act states that An Garda Síochána is listed as a partially included agency "insofar as it relates to administrative records relating to human resources, or finance or procurement matters". Therefore, only administrative records that relate to human resources, finance or procurement shall be considered

Your request sought:

"I am seeking records about how much money was spent on firearms and firearms training by the gardai each year since 2010 and a breakdown of what weapons were bought. ."

I wish to inform you that I have decided to partially grant your request on the 1st May 2017

The purpose of this letter is to explain my decision.

1. Findings, particulars and reasons for decisions.

Details of your request were forwarded to the Garda Síochána College in Templemore to locate relevant records containing the overall costs associated with firearms training within An Garda Síochána. The costs associated with firearms training refer to the annual amount of subsistence allowance paid to the Firearms instructors for the provision of firearms training.

The figures provided below on Table 1 show the total costs for years 2010 to 2016. The Firearms Training Units are based at Garda Headquarters, Dublin 8 and the Garda College, Templemore. The responsibilities of the Firearms Training Unit are the provision of both basic and refresher firearms training programs, development of training strategies, research into new firearms, equipment and matters related to firearms training within An Garda Síochána.

The Firearms Training Unit at the Garda College is responsible for the initial training of the Emergency Response Unit and the Regional Support Unit. It provides ongoing annual refresher training to the Regional Support Unit. The unit carries out training at both Garda and military facilities around the country.

Table 1

An Garda Síochána Firearms Training Costs 2010 to 2016

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
€250,115.62	€221,332.15	€176,025.88	€179,277.94	€206,478.12	€224,670.58	€221,316.44

In order to answer the second part of your request with regard to “*how much money was spent on firearms*” records from the Finance Directorate were sourced. Table 2 below shows the total spend on munitions for 2010 to 2016. The table includes the costs of firearms, component parts, ammunition and repairs/maintenance.

Table 2

An Garda Síochána Firearm Costs 2010 – 2016

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
€327,920.55	€822,700.87	€78,062.46	533,557.53	764,978.53	1,067,089.55	2,514,479.85

An Garda Síochána is an unarmed police force, however a limited number of members of An Garda Síochána are authorised to carry firearms on duty whenever the need arises. All members of An Garda Síochána who are authorised to carry firearms must first successfully complete an initial firearms course on the particular firearm required. In addition further training is required for each different type of firearm.

Firearms are issued to authorised members of An Garda Síochána for personal protection and are utilised to repel felonious attacks on themselves and / or other persons. Each authorised firearms holder of An Garda Síochána must undergo and successfully complete two judgemental live-fire firearms training courses and one firearms training simulator course, on a annual basis.

In addition to authorised firearms holders An Garda Síochána has two specialised firearms units, namely Regional Support Unit (R.S.U.) and Emergency Response Unit (E.R.U.), the members of which have received substantial additional training in firearms and less-lethal options. These units continue to undergo continuous professional development, which includes tactical training.

I am refusing the last part of your request seeking “*what weapons were bought*” pursuant to section 32(1)(a)(i) and 32(1)(a)(ii) of the FOI Act as I am of the opinion that this information can be reasonably expected, if used inappropriately, to prejudice or impair the Garda Organisation operational capabilities. Section 32 of the FOI Act states:

Law enforcement and public safety

32. (1) A head may refuse to grant an FOI request if access to the record concerned could, in the opinion of the head, reasonably be expected to—

(a) prejudice or impair—

(i) “the prevention, detection or investigation of offences, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders or the effectiveness of lawful methods, systems, plans or procedures employed for the purposes of the matter aforesaid”

(ii) “the enforcement of, compliance with or administration of any law”

The detail sought by you in your request seeks to identify the operational capabilities of An Garda Síochána with regard to firearms throughout the Organisation. An Garda Síochána has unique functions, as set out in the Garda Síochána Act 2005, of which one is “*protecting the Security of the State*”. I am of the opinion that nothing should jeopardise, impair or prejudice the ability of An Garda Síochána to carry out that function to its fullest capability.

The detailed firearm related information sought in your request would, if released, specifically identify the make and models of firearms available to An Garda Síochána, thereby allowing for criminal elements in society to proactively develop and / or acquire countermeasures to negate the possible effect an armed Garda response may have in any given situation. This, in turn, would diminish the lawful methods employed by An Garda Síochána to prevent and detect offences and apprehend offenders, as set out in section 32(1)(a)(i) of the FOI Act 2014.

Similarly the provision of records by weapon type would identify to the general public the response capability of An Garda Síochána. The release of this detailed and specific information creates a risk to individual Gardaí who may be issued with a firearm. The criminal element in society will be able to assess the possible armed response capabilities of Gardaí. It is therefore reasonable to expect that it would impair and prejudice the Organisation’s capability to enforce the Law, as set out in section 32(1)(b)(ii) of the FOI Act.

I am conscious of the fact that information released under the FOI Act is, in essence, a release to the world at large. It is my opinion that the release of this information into the public domain via FOI is an unnecessary risk to the law enforcement procedures employed throughout the State and to individual Gardaí, both armed and unarmed.

2. Right of appeal

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek an Internal Review of the matter by writing to the address below and quoting reference number **FOI-000178- 2017**.

Freedom of Information Office,
An Garda Síochána
Athlumney House, IDA Business Park
Johnstown, Navan
Co. Meath
C15 DR90

Please note that a fee applies. This fee has been set at €30 (€10 for a Medical Card holder). Payment should be made by way of bank draft, money order, postal order or personal cheque, and made payable to Accountant, Garda Finance Directorate, Garda Headquarters, Phoenix Park, Dublin 8.

Payment can be made by electronic means, using the following details:

Account Name: Garda Síochána Finance Section Public Bank Account
Account Number: 10026896
Sort Code: 900017
IBAN: IE86B0F190001710026896
BIC: BOFIIIE2D

You must ensure that your FOI reference number is included in the payment details.

You should submit your request for an Internal Review within 4 weeks from the date of this notification. The review will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of An Garda Síochána and the decision will be communicated to you within 3 weeks. The making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances.

Please be advised that An Garda Síochána replies under Freedom of Information may be released in to the public domain via our website at www.garda.ie.

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact me by telephone at (046) 9036350.

Yours sincerely,

 **SUPERINTENDENT**
HELEN DEELY
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER

4TH MAY 2017