

22 May 2023

J A Harris  
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Dear Mr Harris

***Request for information about staff training and understanding of laws***

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request of 14 April 2023. You requested details of information relating to staff training and understanding of New Zealand law.

Each aspect of your request is addressed below, though it is noted that there is some overlap in the responses.

*1. What processes and approaches used by Police to ensure that new staff have an adequate knowledge and understanding of the laws of New Zealand, both as written and as interpreted by the court*

The Royal New Zealand Police College ('RNZPC') is responsible for enabling constabulary staff to achieve Our Business through training, development, and leading change. New constabulary staff receive face-to-face training during the recruit course at the RNZPC, which includes training on the legislative framework for policing in New Zealand

Police recruits have 16 weeks of residential training. During this time, they are required to meet certain standards in various forms of assessments designed to test their knowledge and understanding of the law, policy, and procedures. Upon graduation from Police College, Constables complete a two-year probationary period during which time they must meet competence in a wide range of workplace assessments.

*2. What processes and approaches used by Police to ensure that existing staff have an adequate knowledge and understanding of the laws of New Zealand, including any changes to laws and new laws that are created, both as written and as interpreted by the court*

All aspiring constabulary leaders must pass professional examinations as part of their leadership development and for promotion to the rank of sergeant, senior sergeant and Inspector. As part of the assessment, constabulary employees are tested on their knowledge of legislation underpinning specific policing functions and powers. A pass grade must be achieved before an individual is eligible to apply for positions at the rank of sergeant, senior sergeant, or inspector.

General instructions for Police employees are issued by the Commissioner pursuant to section 28 of the Policing Act 2008 (the 'Police Instructions'). Within the Police Instructions, the Police Manual details instructions for administrative and operational aspects of policing, including nationally consistent standard operating principles, practices, policies and procedures. All Police employees have access to the Police Manual on their mobility devices.

In relation to legislative change, Legal Services or the Policy and Partnerships Group alert business groups and the Police Instructions team to new legislation or amendments

affecting Police. The relevant chapter of the Police Manual is updated by the responsible business unit.

Employees are notified of legislative changes via an organisation wide Pānui (bulletin board) notice and/or a note prepared by Legal Services. For significant legislative changes, nationwide training may be required.

Frontline staff are also able to access the 'Checkpoint' application on their mobility devices. Checkpoint provides an aide-memoire for all frontline staff to assist their decision-making in the course of their operational duties. It is not a training document but rather is designed to complement the Police Instructions.

*3. What processes and approaches are used to test, assess, or confirm the knowledge and understanding of law, both as written and as interpreted by the court of staff/officers*

Police uses a wide range of processes and approaches to test, assess and confirm knowledge of law. These include formative and summative testing of officer's knowledge, workplace assessments, online quizzes and assessments and assessments of portfolios of work as officers train and develop during the course of their careers across a wide range of sub disciplines within Police. These include training for recruits, recent graduate constables undertaking workplace assessments, constables' training to become detectives within the Criminal Investigation Branch, constables working in Road Policing and the investigation of accidents, fingerprint technicians, emergency communications centre staff, service desk staff, and front counter staff.

There is also training for Authorised Offices undertaking a range of roles within Police.

There are compulsory training requirements which Police constabulary staff must complete to ensure they are appropriately trained, and are equipped to undertake, the wide range of operational duties that confront them within their role. Compulsory training includes the Police Integrated Tactical Training (PITT) programme, which is delivered by the RNZPC and provides the means for maintaining the Police employee's knowledge of appropriate use of approved defensive tactics including approved tactical options.

During the 16 weeks of residential training, Police recruits will sit four written exams comprising of offence analysis short answer questions and a series of multiple-choice questions. There are also numerous practical assessments throughout the course where they must meet competence. These are designed to ensure recruits have the required foundation knowledge required to be a police officer. Following graduation, constables complete a two-year probationary period during which time they must meet competence in a wide range of workplace assessments.

In terms of continuing professional development opportunities, Core Policing Knowledge (CPK) examinations assess whether a constabulary employee seeking promotion holds the level of core policing knowledge required for the rank to which they aspire. Constables aspiring to promotion must pass CPK Examinations at Sergeant, Senior Sergeant and Inspector levels. There are many sub disciplines and functional areas within Police, all of which benefit from direct training in law and practice relevant to their field or indirect training through generalist training provided to sworn and civilian staff. Police uses a variety of platforms including internal platforms such as Success Factors and Totara, as well as an external examination provider ASPEQ for national Core Policing Knowledge Examinations.

*4. Statistics detailing the above, for example, course completion data, numbers of staff with outstanding training to complete by training type*

Police has a vast number of training courses, and this type of information would have to be manually collated for each. For this reason, this part of your request cannot be made available without substantial collation or research, therefore it is refused pursuant to section 18(f) of the OIA. Police does not consider that fixing a charge or extending the time limit would enable this part of your request to be granted.

*5. What resources are available to officers who wish to clarify a legal question or seek a legal opinion*

Police has an in-house legal team that is responsible for providing legal advice and assistance to staff to reduce and manage legal risk.

All Police employees also have access to legal resources including the Westlaw and LexisNexis databases, as well as the Police Instructions, which they can consult for guidance on legal issues.

*6. What resources are available to staff who wish to clarify their understanding of a law or of a police policy or procedure, or of a court judgment or IPCA decision*

If a Police employee requires clarification on policy and procedure, they are encouraged to consult their supervisor for advice. Supervisors are responsible for providing leadership and specialist knowledge having attained the relevant supervisor qualification through the CPK examination (for constabulary staff).

All staff are also able to consult the Police Manual in the Police Instructions. The Police Manual details instructions for administrative and operational aspects of policing, including nationally consistent standard operating principles, practices, policies and procedures.

The Checkpoint application is another source of information for frontline staff who wish to clarify their understanding of procedure.

*7. What communication or knowledge or learning platforms, methods, processes, or frameworks are used by police to ensure staff are up to date with policies, procedures, new laws, law changes, guidance from the Court, relevant IPCA decisions etc.*

Updates about legislative changes and case law are disseminated within Police via an organisation wide Pānui (bulletin board) notice and/or a note prepared by Legal Services. The Checkpoint application is also updated to reflect new legislation, policy and procedure.

Individual workgroups and Districts also use newsletters and local line up briefings to communicate change.

I trust this information is of use to you. If you are not satisfied with this response, you may ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the OIA.

Yours sincerely



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New Zealand Police