



2 July 2018

REF NUMBER: IR-01-18-1614

Jason McIntosh  
fyi-request-7820-4d369cd0@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr McIntosh

I refer to your Official Information Act request of 13 May 2018 for information relating to Fleeing Drivers.

You requested:

1. *Could you please list the incidences that have occurred over the last five years?*

There have been nearly 15,000 fleeing driver incidents in the last five years. Therefore this part of your request has been refused pursuant to section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982, in that information you have requested cannot be made available without substantial collation. A full breakdown of the statistics available in relation to fleeing driver incidents can be found on the Police website, <http://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publications-statistics>, under the category 'Driving and Roads'.

2. *How many high speed pursuits have been recorded?*

New Zealand Police does not categorise fleeing driver incidents by whether they were 'high speed'. Therefore this part of your request has been refused pursuant to section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982, in that information you have requested does not exist.

3. *How many have been called off when considered too dangerous??*

In the last 5 years, 8040 pursuits were abandoned. Of these, 2311 cited 'Danger to Public' as the reason for the abandonment.

4. *What are the rules around such events?*

Please find attached a copy of the Police Fleeing Driver Policy. This document contains the information you have requested, and other information you may find useful.

5. *How many people have been injured or killed?*

The information you have requested is available on the Police website, <http://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publications-statistics>, under the category 'Driving and Roads'. Therefore this part of your request has been refused pursuant to section 18(d) of the Official Information Act 1982, in that the information requested is publically available.

6. *How many of these were avoidable?*

Police's Fleeing Driver Policy is based on the premise that drivers who fail to stop for Police and who flee to avoid apprehension pose risks to the public, Police employees and

themselves. In deciding whether or not to pursue a fleeing driver, Police must balance their responsibility to protect lives with their duty to enforce the law. Police has no way to determine how many pursuits that ended in death or serious injury were later deemed avoidable or otherwise without reviewing every event. Therefore this part of your request has been refused pursuant to section 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982, in that information you have requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

*7. Have any police officers faced criminal charges in relation to these deaths?*

Police are held accountable for their actions, both at an individual level and at an organisational level by Police Professional Conduct and the Independent Police Conduct Authority. Fleeing driver incidents, especially those that result in crashes, are carefully examined with a view to ensuring the police officers involved acted in accordance with appropriate and safe procedure. Police Professional Conduct has no record of any Police employees facing criminal proceedings as the result of fleeing driver incidents in the last five years.

*8. In this age of technology and facial recognition can't the police pull back, follow them by drone or helicopter or fixed wing aircraft?*

Police does consider and employ other tactical options before, during and after fleeing driver incidents. Please refer to the 'Tactical Options' chapter of the Fleeing Driver Policy, which includes a detailed explanation of the use of aerial surveillance. Police also regularly review policy and practice, including the investigation of technological solutions with the potential to reduce harm on the road.

*9. How often is it thought to be critical that the offenders are apprehended immediately?*

Police's Fleeing Driver Policy does not refer to any pursuit as being critical in nature. The Police Fleeing Driver Policy outlines the decision making process that the lead driver and pursuit controller follow in order to assess the risk and determine whether or not to pursue a fleeing driver. The pursuit controller must continue to monitor the risks and take responsibility to make decisions about the safe management and apprehension of the fleeing driver. Any of these individuals can order the fleeing driver incident to be abandoned if they believe that the risk to the public, Police employees and/or the fleeing driver outweighs the seriousness of the offence and the necessity of immediate apprehension. Over the last five years incidents where the potential risk to other road users has been considered significant enough reason to engage in pursuit are outlined in Table One. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and shows no relationship with corresponding resolutions or abandonments.

**Table One:**

<b>Reason for engaging</b>	<b>Five year incident total</b>
Offending vehicle was suspected of participating in criminal activity	1751
Driving in a manner that was considered dangerous or reckless	1025
Impairment suspected	718
Avoiding an alcohol breath test checkpoint	297

10. Is the property loss or damage to the egos of the pursuing officers worth more than a human life?

Police takes road safety seriously and is dedicated to reducing trauma on New Zealand roads. As this question does not constitute a request for official information Police declines to make any further comment.

11. Why can't most of these people be found and arrested the next day?

In the last five years, 1853 offenders were identified by enquiries after a fleeing driver incident had concluded. In the same period, 6062 offenders were arrested immediately after a fleeing driver incident had concluded. A further 5688 offenders were never identified. Enquiries after a fleeing driver incident are a resource intensive process, often requiring forensic analysis of the vehicle. As 28% of fleeing driver incidents involve a stolen vehicle the identification of an offender can be difficult.

This reply contains provisional data which is drawn from a dynamic operational database. This is subject to change as new information is recorded or recoded.

You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman and seek an investigation and review of my decision if you are not satisfied with the way I have responded to your request.

Yours sincerely



Superintendent Steve Greally  
National Manager Road Policing