

Request reference: 4367/13

1 How many armed police exercises have been carried out in public by West Midlands Police in the last 24 months?

The Operations Firearms Unit have taken part in TWO exercises within the West Midlands Police area over the last 24 months. A record of the number of Fire Service and Ambulance staff was not recorded by us. Details of these are as follows:

Please could I have the following details of all these exercises:

2 How many officers were involved in each

3 Which local policing team do these officers belong to

4 What firearms were used

5 The time and location (including road name) where each incident took place

6 When each of these exercises are being carried out, what measures are put in place to reassure the public?

7 Has there been any record of any member of the public getting or being involved in any of these exercises? Please can I have details, including date, time and reason, if applicable.

Details of the two exercises are at the end of this document.

8 Why are armed exercises carried out in public?

Armed exercises are carried out in public to give officers a realistic environment in which to practice or test their skills, test contingency plans, capacity and capability.

9 What precautions are put in place to ensure health and safety is maintained when these exercises are carried out?

Prior to the exercise being conducted a risk assessment of the activity and venue is carried out. On arrival at the venue a Dynamic Risk Assessment is also conducted. All officers / staff who take part are briefed accordingly so that they understand their roles and responsibilities.

10 Since when have armed exercises been carried out in public?

There is no known historical data. Personal experience suggests that this has been common place over the last ten years or so.

DETAILS OF THE TWO EXERCISES

Mon 19 Nov 12

Tri Service exercise involving West Midlands Police Firearms / West Midlands Fire Service / West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Number of Police Officers involved: 17 officers from the Operations Firearm Unit. There was approximately a further 6-8 unarmed Police Officers from the Integrated Emergency Management team and the Counter Terrorism Unit.

Which local policing team do these officers belong to See above

What firearms were used: WMP are considering the application of S.24 and S.31 of FOIA. Please see covering letter.

Time and Location: Mon 19 Nov 12. 0130 hours - 0500 hours. WMP are considering the application of S.24 and S.31 of FOIA for the location. Please see covering letter.

How were the public reassured: Exercise was conducted out of view of the public and during the hours of darkness. Control room staff were made aware of the exercise to reassure concerned members of the public who may have reported activity. Any entry doors / windows in public domain were locked and covered to prevent access and view into premises.

Any records of Public involved in the exercise: This exercise involved Tri service personnel. No members of the public were involved except for a volunteer group called Amputees in Action to add realism to the casualties.

Mon 15 Apr 13

Tri Service exercise involving West Midlands Police Firearms / West Midlands Fire Service / West Midlands Ambulance Service

Number of Police Officers involved: 12 officers from the Operations Firearm Unit. There was approximately a further 6-8 unarmed Police Officers from the Integrated Emergency Management team and the Counter Terrorism Unit.

Which local policing team do these officers belong to See above

What firearms were used: WMP are considering the application of S.24 and S.31 of FOIA. Please see covering letter.

Time and Location: Mon 15 Apr 13. 0130 hours - 0500 hours. WMP are considering the application of S.24 and S.31 of FOIA for the location. Please see covering letter.

How were the public reassured: Exercise was conducted out of view of the public and during the hours of darkness. There was a maintenance team carrying out emergency repair at the location during the exercise. They were not in view of the exercise and were made aware that an exercise was taking place. Control room staff were made aware of the exercise to reassure concerned members of the public who may have reported activity. Any entry doors / windows in public domain were locked and covered to prevent access and view into premises.

Any records of Public involved in the exercise: This exercise involved Tri service personnel. No members of the public were involved except for a volunteer group called Amputees in Action to add realism to the casualties.