

Our ref: CRS 606698

From: Gill Stevens  
**Communications Group**  
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[Name and address removed under the Data Protection Act]

Tel:

9 April 2009

Dear [Name removed under the Data Protection Act]

## **ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATION RESPONSE RE SALT SUPPLIES**

Further to your Freedom of Information request dated 13<sup>th</sup> February, we have now completed our search for the information. We had previously advised you that this request has been handled as an Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) request as the nature of the material central to the request warrants it.

In your request you asked for the following information from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008:

- 1. Copies of all communications to include emails and letters between Salt Union and the Highways Agency about the provision and levels of salt to councils.*
- 2. Copies of any contingency plans for maintaining the road system with adequate provision of salt and other measures in the event of extremely cold weather.*

The information is contained in the attachments to this e-mail.

Due to the volume of documents an index of e-mails and attachments is also provided for part 1 of your request.

Please note that the information has had all personal details redacted under Section 13: Personal Information, but we have indicated how many names have been removed, and which organisation they represented – for example (Salt Union 2) indicated two representatives from the Salt Union. Some information was also considered commercially sensitive and has been removed. The information being withheld falls under exception 12 (5)(e) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. A copy of the public interest test undertaken is included with this letter and provides a key to enable understanding why each redacted section was removed.

The information relating to part 2 of your enquiry is also attached in pdf format, annotated as Part 2, and consists of typical documents for a single area.

The Agency holds contingency plans for all its operational areas, but given the large volume of information, they have not been included within this response. They can, however, be made available for viewing at the Highways Agency offices in Birmingham or London by request.

In order to manage England's strategic network, the Highways Agency has divided the network into fourteen areas. Each of these Areas is assigned a dedicated Area team and a contractor, known as a Managing Agent Contractor (MAC). Amongst many of the duties defined under their contract, the MAC is responsible for the direct delivery of the Agency's winter service.

Within the MAC contracts, the Agency's winter service requirement is specified within Part 5 of the Network Management Manual (NMM). Along with setting out the Agency's winter requirements, the NMM provides a template for the Severe Weather Plan (SWP). Prior to the start of each winter season each MAC is required to complete the SWP and submit to the relevant Agency Area team for acceptance.

The SWP confirms the winter service processes and contingency considerations for each of the operational areas. These documents, together with the Area contingency plan define the plans for each of the areas through the winter season.

A copy of Part 5 of the NMM is attached, which also includes the SWP template. In addition, a completed SWP for a single area is attached, together with the associated contingency plan for that area.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the legislation, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. We will, therefore, be simultaneously releasing to the public the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context via our website: <http://www.highways.gov.uk/>

Most documents supplied by us will have been produced by government officials so will be Crown Copyright. You can find details on the arrangements for re-using Crown copyright on the Office of Public Sector Information website at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/index.htm>.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request, you may ask for an internal review. A leaflet detailing our internal review process is attached. You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Gill Stevens  
Head of Communications