

09 August 2019

Our Reference: IR-01-19-18768

Emmy Rakete
Fyi-request-10712-d3216976@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Rakete

I am writing in response to the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request submitted on 9 July 2019. Specifically you requested:

"In social media posts made by New Zealand Police on 8th July 2019, reference was made to the tactical use of the "rotor wash" of Police helicopters in apprehending suspected offenders.

- 1. Provide me with the Police's definition of this maneuver.*
- 2. Provide me with any manuals or internal documents describing how this maneuver is performed by Police staff.*
- 3. Provide me with any documentation describing the circumstances in which this maneuver is approved for use.*
- 4. Provide me with any documentation of safety studies or any other forms of evaluation used by New Zealand Police to determine that this maneuver is safe.*
- 5. Provide me with information describing the number of people this "rotor wash" maneuver has been used against by Police staff. Break this information down by year, police district, and the ethnicity of the people against whom this maneuver was used. Provide this information in searchable spreadsheet format, not embedded in an unsearchable pdf.*
- 6. Provide me with information detailing the estimated or actual monetary cost to deploy a helicopter for the purpose of a rotor "wash" maneuver."*


I have considered your request and my response is as follows:

- 1. Provide me with the Police's definition of this maneuver.*

Police hold no formal definition of this manoeuvre, however it's common terminology within the civil aviation industry is 'an in-ground hover where the rotor wash from the main rotor blades builds up a pressure cushion against a hard service such as the ground'.

Police National Headquarters

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2. Provide me with any manuals or internal documents describing how this maneuver is performed by Police staff.

There are no manuals or internal documents that detail how this manoeuvre is performed by Police staff. Therefore this part of your request is declined under section 18(e), as the information does not exist. However, I have provided you with a copy of the Police Manual Chapter that outlines the Police air operations policy and principles. Sections of this document have been redacted as they do not relate and fall out of scope of the information you have requested

3. Provide me with any documentation describing the circumstances in which this maneuver is approved for use.

4. Provide me with any documentation of safety studies or any other forms of evaluation used by New Zealand Police to determine that this maneuver is safe.

Decisions in regards to tactics or manoeuvres are made on a case by case basis determined by the incident NZ Police attend and in consultation between the Pilot and the Police crew. The action taken by police staff during this incident was pursuant to section 13A of the Civil Aviation Act 1990 (CAA) and supported sections 39 and 48 of the Crimes Act 1961. As such, there is no NZ Police documentation that describes the circumstances in which this manoeuvre is approved for use. The pilots are fully trained in a range of tactics, manoeuvres and safety relevant to the situations they may be deployed to and fly to within CAA aviation rules.

NZ Police have adopted a threat assessment methodology (TENR) that applies to all policing situations that involve risk and have the potential to cause harm. I have provided a copy of the TENR Police Manual Chapter for your information which supports the decision making process.

5. Provide me with information describing the number of people this "rotor wash" maneuver has been used against by Police staff. Break this information down by year, police district, and the ethnicity of the people against whom this maneuver was used. Provide this information in searchable spreadsheet format, not embedded in an unsearchable pdf.

NZ Police do not record the number of the times the 'rotor wash' manoeuvre has been utilised during Eagle helicopter deployments. Therefore, this part of your request is declined under section 18(e) of the Act as the information does not exist.

6. *Provide me with information detailing the estimated or actual monetary cost to deploy a helicopter for the purpose of a "rotor wash" maneuver.*

The cost of deploying the Eagle helicopter for the purpose of a "rotor wash" manoeuvre cannot be provided as each deployment to these incidents is part of our operational requirement and, therefore part of our operational budget. This part of your request is declined under section 18(e) of the Act as the information you have requested does not exist.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act 1982, to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision if you are not satisfied with the way I have responded to your request.

Yours sincerely



Acting Superintendent Andrew Sissons
National Manager, Response and Operations