



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

-4 NOV 2014

David Nicholas

fyi-request-1980-3e5da64b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Nicholas

Thank you for your email of 3 September 2014 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, information about security staff.

The Ministry employs almost 10,000 staff who work at more than 290 locations in New Zealand. In the last year the Ministry has administered, on behalf of government, a total spend of \$23.2 billion in social services outcomes, received 2 million visits to its frontline offices, received 148,000 notifications of child abuse and neglect and answered over 12 million phone calls.

On 1 September 2014, two staff members were tragically killed by an armed gunman in the Ashburton Work and Income service centre. A third staff member was seriously injured but survived. The Ministry has always taken threatening behaviour seriously and since 1 September 2014, the Ministry has implemented a zero tolerance policy towards such behaviour. Every threat is taken seriously and is dealt with swiftly by the Ministry and the New Zealand Police. The Ministry is committed to providing a safe working environment for its employees and it is unacceptable for people to threaten Ministry staff who are carrying out their professional duties.

Since 3 September 2014, the Ministry has added 278 additional security staff to sites, and implemented new security processes, including controlled access at all Work and Income public facing sites. This means that security guards control entry to sites and may require people to provide proof of identity. It also means that any person who presents as a risk will be declined access. The prime function of the security guard is to observe, monitor and report for the purposes of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Ministry employees.

The Ministry regularly reviews its security protocols and site safety plans but the Ashburton incident has prompted a further examination. The Ministry commissioned an independent Security Review led by former New Zealand Police Commissioner Rob Robinson and Deloitte New Zealand Chairman Murray Jack. The objectives of the review are to determine:

1. Given the Ministry's functions and activities and the risks associated with those, were all practicable steps taken to ensure the safety of Ministry employees in relation to the shooting at the Ashburton office?
2. What changes are recommended to the physical security environment in Ministry workplaces to ensure the physical safety of staff and members of the public from threats and assaults?

This first part of the review looked at public-facing service centres (predominantly Work and Income sites, including services for seniors and students), including those where the Ministry is co-located with other agencies. The second part of the review will look at all remaining Ministry workplaces. As you are aware, the report on the first part of the review was released publicly on 26 September 2014 and is available on the Ministry's website at www.msd.govt.nz.

The second part of the security review is underway and will be made publicly available upon completion.

Each of your questions will be answered in turn.

How many security staff are employed by this agency?

Do they have to be registered and qualified as per the Private Security Personnel and Private Investigators Act?

Do security personnel have to have a reasonable level of fitness like the NZ Police have to have?

Prior to the incident in Ashburton on 1 September 2014, the Ministry had contracted the services of 169 security staff. Since 3 September 2014, the Ministry has added 278 additional security staff to sites, and implemented new security processes, including controlled access at all Work and Income sites. This means that security guards control entry to sites and may require people to provide proof of identity. It also means that any person who presents as a risk will be declined access. There are now at least two security guards at each public-facing site.

The Ministry acknowledges that some people may feel inconvenienced by the new security measures. However, staff safety is paramount and the Ministry will take all steps that it deems necessary to ensure staff can safely carry out their duties of serving, caring for and assisting New Zealanders in need.

Security personnel are not employed by the Ministry, rather the Ministry contracts Armourguard to fulfill its security requirements. Armourguard staff working at Ministry sites complete formal training which covers a wide range of areas including: security standards, basic law, communication, reporting procedures, environment, health and safety hazard identification and control, site specific training and customer service skills. Additional training is also provided on conflict management, as a way of diffusing potentially hostile situations. Specific training, developed in conjunction with the Ministry, is provided to all staff who regularly guard Ministry sites.

Armourguard staff are also given the opportunity to study towards achieving formal NZQA Level 2 qualifications for security industry professionals. This covers a number of topics including: the law applied to the industry, communication skills, health and safety, personal risk management, dealing with emergencies, first aid skills, conflict management, operational requirements (including control of entry and exit to premises, and observation and threat identification) and suppressing fire with hand extinguishers and fixed hose reels.

All security guards have to be registered and qualified as per the Private Security Personnel and private Investigators Act. Security personnel do not have to have a reasonable level of fitness as is required of New Zealand Police.

What are the security staff paid? What Key Performance Indicators (KPI) do security staff have in their contracts?

As security staff are not employed directly by the Ministry, their contracts (including any Key Performance Indicators) and remuneration are managed by their employer, Armourguard. This information is therefore withheld under section 18(g) of the Official Information Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry.

What training do case workers and front line MSD staff have to enable them to diffuse potentially difficult situations with clients? What on-going professional development do staff undertake in how to handle difficult clients?

The Ministry of Social Development provides services for some of the most vulnerable people in New Zealand, helping them to lead safe, strong, and independent lives.

The Ministry's role is to help people who often are at their lowest point. They can be upset, angry and despondent. This can lead to difficult and tense moments but at all times we aim to be professional and courteous. We aim to treat people with respect, and expect that in return.

It is now apparent that the Ministry's employees have tolerated too much bad behaviour in the past and this cannot be allowed to continue.

To have a real impact in people's lives means that the Ministry often needs to have close contact with those they work with – to build rapport and assist people, not just administer entitlements. The staff who deliver these services need to be assured of their safety and security. It is imperative that the Ministry has the right measures in place to provide this assurance and meet the Ministry's legislative obligations in relation to health and safety. Staff receive various health and safety and security training. This can include practical advice on how to de-escalate potentially violent situations, dealing with clients with mental health issues, and site safety plans. Training is provided as part of initial induction with subsequent refresher courses and updates. There is a documented induction programme and "ActSAFE Staff Safety Conversations" (scenario-based training) which has been rolled out to sites since November 2013, usually as part of the regular Wednesday briefing sessions. Phase One of the Security Review made reference to additional conflict-management and de-escalation training that was scheduled to occur during September 2014 but which was deferred as a result of the incident on 1 September 2014. This training is now being rolled-out across the country.

Health and safety guidance and information is available on the Ministry's intranet site – Doogle – for all staff to access at any time. This includes information on staff safety and awareness, and how to issue trespass notices. This information is regularly updated to ensure that staff have the most up-to-date information available for accessing at any time.

All public-facing offices have CCTV cameras and monitors and security guards are on site between 8.30 am and 5pm Monday to Friday and duress alarms are accessible to staff within public-facing offices.

Are micro-counselling or restorative justice practises techniques taught to staff?

Work and Income staff do not engage in micro-counselling or restorative justice practices techniques.

How many assaults and threats have been made to staff in the past 5 years shown by each office?

The State Sector Act 1988 and the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 outline the Ministry's obligation to be a 'good employer', including the Ministry's obligation to provide a safe working environment for its employees.

The Ministry places a high priority on the safety of its staff and the New Zealanders it serves. Our security policy is an essential component of the Ministry's strategy to reduce risks, not only to staff, but also to our clients. Abusive or threatening behaviour towards Ministry staff is treated very seriously. Staff report all incidents to the security guard in their office and enter the incident in the Ministry's incident reporting database. Where appropriate, the incident is referred to the Police for investigation. The Ministry also provides follow-up advice and support for any staff involved in such incidents, including support through the Employee Assistance Programme.

People who intimidate staff or other people on site by demonstrating aggressive and threatening behaviour will either be warned verbally or in writing. However, where warnings have been previously issued or in serious cases, such as assault or wilful damage to property, they will be served a trespass notice.

You will find enclosed a table which summarises the number of incidents across all Ministry sites (excluding Child, Youth and Family residences) over the last four calendar years. The data is based on client facing incidents that cover the categories of abusive behaviour, arson, assault, breach of trespass order, criminal damage and unauthorised access. It does not include instances of burglary, theft, loss, graffiti, or loss of Ministry information. The incident categories are as per the Ministry's ratings of incident severity.

Please note that prior to 2011, threats and assaults were recorded under a different categorisation and as such cannot be readily reconciled in the same manner as the more recent data. Substantial manual collation would therefore be required to locate and provide pre-2011 data, and as such your request for data prior to 2011 is refused under section 18(f) of the Act. I believe that the public interest is satisfied by providing you with data between 2011 and 2014.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake its work would still be prejudiced.

I hope you find this information regarding the Ministry's security policies helpful. You have the right to seek an investigation and review of my response by the Ombudsman, whose address for contact purposes is:

The Ombudsman
Office of the Ombudsman
PO Box 10-152
WELLINGTON 6143

Yours sincerely



Rupert Ablett-Hampson
Deputy Chief Executive People, Capability and Resources

Table for threats, assaults and incidents across all Ministry sites.

Calendar Year	Region	Critical	Serious	Moderate	Minor	Total
2011	Auckland	–	22	503	91	616
	Auckland Regional Operations	–	–	1	–	1
	Bay of Plenty	–	5	140	38	183
	Canterbury	–	6	107	23	136
	Central	3	9	126	18	156
	East Coast	–	7	117	32	156
	Midlands	–	–	1	–	1
	Nelson	–	2	57	23	82
	Northern	2	3	5	–	10
	Northland	1	5	60	14	80
	Southern	2	15	70	46	133
	Taranaki	–	7	91	23	121
	Waikato	–	11	153	30	194
	Wellington	1	9	84	15	109
	Total		9	101	1,515	353
2012	Auckland	3	28	449	83	563
	Bay of Plenty	1	4	120	45	170
	Canterbury	1	11	183	28	223
	Central	1	16	145	41	203
	East Coast	–	1	122	29	152
	Midlands	–	3	5	–	8
	National Office	–	5	7	–	12
	Nelson	1	5	84	13	103
	Northern	–	3	9	2	14
	Northland	–	3	122	23	148
	Southern	1	17	97	23	138
	Taranaki	–	5	73	24	102
	Waikato	–	8	137	27	172
	Wellington	1	9	151	27	188
Total		9	118	1,704	365	2,196
2013	Auckland	1	36	493	97	627
	Auckland/Tamaki-makau-rau	–	1	2	–	3
	Bay of Plenty	–	2	155	32	189
	Canterbury	–	22	264	48	334
	Central	–	12	183	32	227

	East Coast	–	6	95	24	125
	Region	Critical	Serious	Moderate	Minor	Total
	Midlands	–	2	6	–	8
	National Office	–	2	5	2	9
	Nelson	1	–	75	11	87
	Northern	–	5	12	–	17
	Northern/Te Tai Tokerau	–	–	8	1	9
	Northland	–	3	86	25	114
	Southern	–	10	111	18	139
	Taranaki	–	9	115	29	153
	Waikato	–	15	144	28	187
	Wellington	1	11	176	24	212
	Total	3	136	1,930	371	2,440
	2014	Auckland	–	23	459	1
Auckland Regional Operations		–	–	1	–	1
Auckland/Tamaki-makau-rau		–	6	27	–	33
Bay of Plenty		–	7	114	1	122
Canterbury		–	19	152	1	172
Central		1	16	144	2	163
East Coast		–	4	101	2	107
Midlands		1	3	10	–	14
National Office		–	–	7	–	7
Nelson		–	6	100	1	107
Northern		–	–	1	–	1
Northern/Te Tai Tokerau		–	3	13	–	16
Northland		–	1	107	–	108
Southern		–	21	120	–	141
Taranaki		–	–	83	1	84
Waikato		–	19	170	2	191
Wellington		–	12	98	1	111
Total		2	140	1,707	12	1,861
Total	23	495	6,856	1,101	8,475	

Notes:

- Critical incidents are those most severe and include death, serious injury requiring hospitalisation, and bomb threats or arson.
- Serious incidents include physical harm that requires medical treatments, threats made with an intention to harm, stalking or intimidation of staff.
- Moderate incidents includes assaults where there is no injury, aggression and abuse.
- Minor are security incidents that do not fit within the other criteria.

- 2014 figures are up to 29 August 2014 only as the calendar year is not yet complete