NEW ZEALAND POLICE
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa

IR-01-23-33053

24 October 2023

Name Redacted

Request for information

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) request dated 17 October 2023. You wrote:

> *I seek information about Police attendance at sudden deaths in New Zealand from 2018 to 2023 for research purposes. I understand the code entered on the CARD system for sudden death is 1S and that the police attended 5,942 sudden death events from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 (previous OIA).*
>
> *1. Please advise the total number of annual sudden deaths (Code 1S) attended by the Police for each year from 2018 to 1 October 2023. Where the annual data is straddled over two years, please provide this information with the corresponding time periods.*
>
> *2. Please can you provide a breakdown of different age groups for annual sudden death events for each year between 2018 and 2023 (or over the time periods provided in question 1).*
>
> *3. How many of the annual sudden death events related to vehicle accidents for each year between 2018 and 2023 (or over the time periods provided in question 1)*

When Police communication centres receive a request for service, an event is entered in the Communication and Resource Deployment (CARD) system. CARD events can only have one code type, and Police practice is to code the most serious risk or alleged offence. Sudden deaths would usually be coded as 1S.

Under section 17 of the Coroners Act 2006, Police has a statutory obligation to investigate sudden and unexplained deaths.

The table below shows the number of 1S events attended by Police between 1 January 2018 and 1 October 2023 (inclusive).

Table 1. Attended 1S events between 1 January 2018 and 1 October 2023.

Calendar Year	Attended 1S Events
2018	5,124
2019	5,358
2020	5,124
2021	5,306
2022	5,924
2023 to 1 Oct	4,490

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Data in this response is drawn from a dynamic operational database and is subject to change as new information is recorded or updated.

Your questions 2 and 3 are refused under section 18(g) of the OIA as the information is not held.

This is because the CARD system is about Police attendance to events – it does not have information about individual people involved in each event. It is an operational system designed to enable unit dispatch and event management. Once an event is closed, it may then be transferred to the case management and investigation system (NIA) where more detailed information about people and offences is recorded (such as further investigation details and more specific details about an offence if there is one).

Vehicle collisions reported to Police are almost always recorded as a 1V (vehicle collision) event, regardless of whether a death occurs. The cause of a fatal crash may not be determined for several months or years after the incident due to the subsequent coronial investigation, at which point it may be ruled that a sudden medical event caused the collision and resultant death. These details are not recorded in CARD.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency holds data in its Crash Analysis System[1] on the causes of vehicle crashes, including fatalities ruled as medical events.

Police does not hold information about causes of death where there is no offence such as suicide or a car crash caused by a medical event; however, Ministry of Health holds information on cause of death from coronial investigations[2], and publishes data on suicide deaths[3].

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that as part of its commitment to openness and transparency, Police proactively releases some information and documents that may be of interest to the public. An anonymised version of this response may be publicly released on the New Zealand Police website.

Ngā mihi

A/Superintendent Bronwyn Marshall
Director Emergency Communications Centres (Relieving)

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[1] https://www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/partners/crash-analysis-system/
[2] https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/national-collections-and-surveys/collections/mortality-collection
[3] https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/suicide-facts-data-tables-19962016