| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information ResponseOur reference: FOI 25-1401Responded to: 03 July 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## I write to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. With respect to multimedia forensic processes, could you please provide me with a copy of the most recent Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), guidance documents, or policy documents held by your force. For clarity, by multimedia forensics I refer specifically to the forensic analysis, enhancement, authentication, interpretation, and presentation of audio, video, and still-image material. This does not include general digital forensics (such as the extraction of data from computers, mobile devices, or other storage media). I am solely concerned with processes dealing directly with audio, video, and image evidence. Specifically, please provide the material requested in the following four bullet points:

## A copy of the SOPs, guidance documents, or policy documents covering the forensic processing, enhancement, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of audio, video, and image material for investigative or evidential purposes.

## 2. Any internal multimedia forensic workflows, protocols, or standard practices related to handling such material.

## 4. The quality assurance, validation, or review procedures used to ensure the accuracy, authenticity, and admissibility of multimedia forensic evidence. If the full SOPs or documents cannot be shared, I kindly request the following information in place of the SOP as per the following seven points:

## 5. A summary or description of the multimedia forensic processes followed.

## 6. SOP titles, version numbers, and the dates of their creation, last update, and validation/approval.

## 7. The roles, departments, or individuals responsible for authoring, validating, or approving the SOPs.

## 8. The legislation, policies, standards, or external guidance referenced during the development and/or review of the SOPs.

## 9. Whether the SOPs have undergone any ethical review or approval, and details of any such review processes or bodies involved.

## 10. Whether the SOPs have been externally validated, peer-reviewed, or accredited by any agency, professional body, or external organization.

## 11. Whether any SOPs are currently under review, have recently been amended, or are scheduled for updates, and the relevant timelines if applicable. In addition to the previous, please provide responses to the following four points regarding the use of emerging technologies:

We have carried out an extensive enquiry with a number of force departments and divisions including Cybercrime, Major Investigation Teams and our Technical Support Unit and the information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies.

## 3. The names of software, tools, or systems used for these processes, including any associated training or operational guidance.

In terms of Section 16 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to provide you with the information sought. Section 16 requires Police Scotland when refusing to provide such information because it is exempt, to provide you with a notice which:

(a) states that it holds the information,

(b) states that it is claiming an exemption,

(c) specifies the exemption in question and

(d) states, if that would not be otherwise apparent, why the exemption applies.

Where information is considered to be exempt, this letter serves as a Refusal Notice that information is held and an explanation of the appropriate exemption is provided below.

The following exemptions are applicable to the above requested information:

**35(1)(a)&(b) – Law Enforcement**

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would or would be likely to prejudice substantially the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Public safety is of paramount importance and disclosure of this information would allow criminals the ability to assess the capability of Police Scotland.

Disclosure of this information would enable criminals to build a picture of resources and capabilities and as such would allow them to conduct their criminal activities.

To disclose this information into the public domain would compromise the effective delivery of operational law enforcement. In addition, the requested information, if disclosed, could be used to calculate how and when resources are allocated within the specialist areas of protection.

Those with criminal intent would then be able to more accurately estimate the resources allocated to protect such individuals in the future.

This is a non-absolute exemption and requires a public interest test.

**Public interest test:**

I would suggest that public accountability would favour disclosure, given that the information concerns the efficient and effective use of resources by the Service. Likewise, disclosure of the information would also inform the public debate on the issue of policing and would contribute to the accuracy of that debate.

However the applicability of the exemption listed above, the need to ensure the effective conduct of the service in relation to prevention and detection of crime and, the public safety considerations involved in the delivery of operational policing clearly favour non-disclosure of the information requested.

On balance the public interest on this occasion favours non-disclosure of this data.

## 12. Please detail whether your multimedia forensic unit currently uses or has trialled artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning (ML) tools for: o Authentication (e.g., detecting edits, deepfakes, or tampering) o Enhancement (e.g., audio/video/image quality improvement) o Analysis or interpretation (e.g., transcription, object recognition, pattern matching) Note: a simple response is acceptable here such as "Authentication: Use. Enhancement: Trialled. Analysis: Not used"

## 13. If applicable, the names or vendors of the AI/ML tools used.

## 14. Whether the use of these tools is governed by any SOPs, internal policies, or ethical guidelines.

## 15. Whether the adoption and use of AI/ML tools have been subject to ethical review, oversight, or risk assessment, and any details of such reviews or assessments. I understand some content may be subject to exemptions, and I would appreciate any available redacted, summary, or contextual information where full disclosure is not possible.

The information sought is not held by Police Scotland and section 17 of the Act therefore applies. To explain, our Digital Forensics team do not use Artificial Intelligence.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by email or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by email or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.