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| Our ref: FOI 736,813Your ref: request-326866-22ae3978@whatdotheyknow.com | OT Directorate Services Team Manager9th FloorThe Cube199 Wharfside StreetBirmingham B1 1RN11 May 2016 |

Dear

Thank you for your request for information about incident support vehicles, dated 06 April 2016. I have dealt with your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In your email of 11 April you asked the following questions:

*1. What is the job of the Incident Support Unit?*

*2. What duties can they do when not required for Incidents?*

*3. What safeguards to protect from traffic on 2?*

*4. What are the vehicle specifications for ISU vehicles and appropriate size?*

On 13 April we asked you to clarify your request. You clarified your request on the same day:

*The request is about the service provider Incident Support Units, but relates to your guidelines for them.*

Dedicated Incident Support Units form part of our Managing Agent Contracts (MAC) who work to the specifications set out in the Network Management Manual, Part 7 (Chapter 7.11)

<http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/nmm_rwsc/docs/nmm_part_7a.pdf>

However, many of the MAC contracts have now been replaced by Asset Support Contracts (ASC). The ASC contract no longer includes the requirement for the service provider to supply a dedicated ISU team. ASC incident response is now formulated from trained, general workforce operatives who are removed from routine network operations (ie grass cutting and litter picking) and deployed to attend incidents when the need arises.

For the purpose of answering your request, the answers provided relate specifically to our remaining MAC contracts. Taking each of your questions in turn:

1. *What is the job of the Incident Support Unit?*

The purpose of an ISU is to minimise disruption to road users by providing a safe and timely response to incidents and quicker clearance of blocked lanes. Whilst many different types of incidents occur on our network, there are a number of basic functions, defined below, which can be carried out by an ISU at the scene of most incidents. The primary functions of ISUs are to:

* Make the incident scene safer through the application of emergency
traffic management;
* Relieve congestion and remove hazards to safety by the clearance of
debris from traffic lanes and hard shoulders;
* Undertake repairs to highway infrastructure damaged as a result of
an incident;
* Assess the scene and secure the attendance of additional or
specialist resources where the task is beyond the ISU's capabilities;
* Provide a communications link between the incident site and our
service provider's network control centre, or its equivalent.
1. *What duties can they do when not required for Incidents?*

When not engaged in fulfilling the primary functions, the ISU can be employed on secondary functions such as:

* Patrolling, monitoring and reporting on the network;
* Undertaking routine maintenance;
* Making safe defects to the highway infrastructure.

These activities must not compromise the response to incidents or impact upon the required response times.

1. *What safeguards to protect from traffic on 2?*

When employed on activities other than incident response, ISU crews will work either within traffic management or on the verge where no traffic management is required. In either case, works are carried out in accordance with suitably established and sufficient risk assessments.  The risk assessments are regularly reviewed and consider the risk of passing traffic as well as establish, where appropriate, measures to be implemented to reduce this risk to acceptable levels. They will also provide advance signage if necessary (dependant on works duration) in accordance with the Traffic Signs Manual - Chapter 8: [*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual)

1. *What are the vehicle specifications for ISU vehicles and appropriate size?*

Full vehicle specifications can be viewed in the Network Management Manual Part 7, Chapter 7.11

<http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/nmm_rwsc/docs/nmm_part_7a.pdf>

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk. 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 reference number CRS 736,813 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Email: ndd\_c\_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk