



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2022-4548

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██████████
██████████@stuff.co.nz

Dear ██████████

I refer to your email of 25 October 2022 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following:

How many bomb squads does NZDF have, where are they based, and how many people in them (total)?

The New Zealand Defence Force maintains an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) capability with personnel throughout New Zealand. EOD capability is based in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The number of personnel is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA.

How many callouts have there been in each of the following years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, so far in 2022?

A breakdown of the above by region.

Year	Northern region	Central region	Southern region	HMNZS Matataua ¹	Total
2018	64	30	28	2	124
2019	84	53	53	4	194
2020	62	40	31	2	135
2021	60	36	41	2	139
2022 to date	46	35	15	1	97

For 2021 and so far in 2022, how long did the longest job (nationally) take? In which region was it and what did it involve?

Since 1 January 2021, the longest job nationally has taken approximately 53.75 hours, in the Southern region (Nelson). This task involved 21 hours travel time and the inspection, removal and disposal of a quantity of degraded picric acid.

For 2021 and so far in 2022, how long did the longest job in the Waikato take? What did it involve?

Since 1 January 2021, the longest job in the Waikato region has taken approximately 7.5 hours including 2 hours travel time. The task involved old mining explosives and detonators.

¹ The Royal New Zealand Navy has an EOD capability (underwater) and some tasks have been conducted by the naval dive team from HMNZS Matataua

For 2021 and so far in 2022, how long did the shortest job (nationally) take? In which region was it and what did it involve?

Since 1 January 2021, the shortest job nationally took approximately 1 hour in the Wellington region. The job did not involve an item of ordnance but it appeared to be potentially hazardous. The EOD team identified the item and provided advice on appropriate disposal.

For 2021 and so far in 2022, how long did the shortest job in the Waikato take? What did it involve?

Since 1 January 2021, the shortest job in the Waikato region has taken 4 hours, including two hours travel time. The task involved an inert (no explosive) World War Two era grenade.

Four other examples of jobs that squads have been called to.

EOD personnel respond to a range of incidents, such as those involving old explosives used for mining and World War Two era ordnance, or improvised explosive devices. An EOD response could be in support of the New Zealand Police, Fire and Emergency New Zealand or any other Government organisation requiring assistance or advice regarding explosives and explosive devices. Four examples of EOD responses are:

1. The Christchurch mosque shootings on 15 March 2019. Personnel were deployed to clear explosive threats in support of the New Zealand Police.
2. The Whakaari/ White Island eruption on 8 December 2019. Personnel were deployed to the Island in hazardous conditions to recover the bodies of the deceased.
3. Support to the New Zealand Police and Fire and Emergency New Zealand in an incident in Levin on 4 and 5 August 2022. The deployment was to clear explosive threats. It was eventually determined that there were no explosives present.
4. Deployment to dispose of a mortar bomb in Epsom on 9 September 2022. This task was in a suburban area and particular care was required as there was a possible risk to life and property. Several residences in the immediate area were evacuated.

For 2022, about how many hours of work have squads done across all jobs in the year?

Approximately 480 EOD hours have been tasked to date in 2022. This does not include routine operational maintenance time, coordination and support functions such as logistics and administration.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely



AJ WOODS
Air Commodore
Chief of Staff HQNZDF