



Date: 11 April 2005

Dear

I am writing to confirm that the Agency has now completed its search for the information you requested on 11 March 2005.

You requested “ *the geographic number that the premium rate number 0870 850 444 is ported onto?*”

However, I have to clarify that DVLA do not use a Premium Rate Number for its Electronic Vehicle Licensing (EVL) facility, but apply a non-geographic (0870) number which is different.

This information you have requested is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in sections 29(1)(b) and 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. In all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The attached annex sets out the exemption in full, as well as the factors the Agency considered when deciding where the public interest lay. It also includes a schedule of the types of documents analysed by the Agency when considering your request.

If you are unhappy with the way DVLA has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain by writing to me. Please see the attached details of the Department for Transport’s complaint procedure.

If you have any queries about this e-mail, please contact me quoting the above reference number in any future communications.

Yours sincerely



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

An executive agency of the
Department for
Transport

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT'S (DfT) COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

You have the right to complain about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will be automatically referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of our complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

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

ANNEX A

Exemptions in full:

S29(1)(b)

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice [...] the financial interests of any administration in the United Kingdom, as defined by section 28(2).

S43(2)

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it)

Factors for disclosure	<i>Factors for withholding</i>
<p>The need for DVLA users to have convenient phone access.</p> <p>The higher price of 0870 phone calls.</p>	<p>The information may be passed on to other parties. There is a risk that, ultimately, the 0870 number may fall into disuse. The advantages of using this number would then no longer be available. This would have two series of consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Consequences; this has been a consideration when assessing the request under S29(1)(b) and S43(2). - Commercial Consequences; the use of the 0870 number helps DVLA to manage effectively, and to maintain the quality of the service it provides to its customers. This has been taken into account when assessing the “commercial interest” of DVLA under S43(2). <p>The following are illustrations of the advantages that flow from the use of 0870 numbers and of the problem that would come from using alternative arrangements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of 0870 numbers generates

	<p>income for the DVLA. It uses it in furtherance of its statutory functions which are in the public interest. This reduces its need to use taxpayers money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Disclosing the equivalent geographic number has the potential to severely affect the call-plan structure.- 0870 numbers allow DVLA to receive real time reports which allow us to ensure that we have the correct resources in place to offer our customers the best possible service at the least cost to the tax payer.- There are other technical advantages to the use of 0870 numbers: freedom in changing delivery points, increasing or reducing the number of lines to a service at short notice, managing peaks and troughs, fully utilising lines, dealing with changes in area codes, savings on line rental and the use of statistical packages used to forecast demand. <p>The inconvenience of the use of 0870 numbers is mitigated by the fact that the average call is short (4 minutes), and that there are other channels of re-licensing and making a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) declaration, e.g. Post Office, Internet.</p>
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Reasons why public interest favours withholding information

DVLA takes special efforts to ensure that users have convenient ways to re-license their vehicles or make a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN). The customer can choose the option most convenient for them. All can use the conventional methods of re-licensing at a Post Office and declaring SORN via the mail - forms V11, V890 and V14. Provided certain criteria can be met, customers can take advantage of the convenience of an Internet service or automated telephone service via a non-geographic number. The choice rests with the customer.

By disclosing the geographic delivery number within DVLA's call plan for the Electronic Vehicle Licensing facility, this would have an adverse effect on customer service. DVLA's call plan allows for an agreed number of calls to be directed to a specific number. If customers were to attempt to telephone this number direct, the call plan would route calls to an already ceased line. This may result in some customers getting an engaged tone as it would not be possible to direct the calls to the delivery numbers in the plan when there are available lines.

Type of Document	Applicable Exemption
E-mail	Section 29(1)(b) and 43(2)