

Date: 15th September 2026
Our ref: FOI/26/017388/C

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/26/017388/C

I write in connection with your request for information dated 05/08/2026, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

I am interested in blue-light spotting and I want to make sure I understand the rules properly when watching, photographing or filming police and other emergency services in public places.

Could you please provide any information, guidance or policies that Greater Manchester Police has about the following:

- 1. What laws or rules should someone know if they are photographing or filming police officers, police cars or other police activity from a public place?***
- 2. Are members of the public allowed to take photos or videos of police vehicles, including when they are using blue lights and sirens?***
- 3. When can a police officer ask someone to stop taking photos or filming, move somewhere else, or leave an area?***
- 4. When can the police search or take someone's phone, camera or other recording equipment when they are filming police activity?***
- 5. What rules apply if someone gets in the way of police officers or an ongoing police operation?***
- 6. Are there any offences that someone watching or filming police activity should be particularly aware of, such as obstruction, harassment or public order offences?***
- 7. Are there any GMP rules or guidance about using drones to film or watch police activity?***

8. What should someone do to keep a safe distance from police incidents, road accidents, cordons or other emergency situations?

9. When could filming or watching an emergency incident be considered interfering with or slowing down the emergency response?

10. Do GMP officers have any training or guidance about dealing with members of the public who photograph or film police activity?

I would prefer the information electronically, including links or copies of any documents that can be shared.

I am not asking for any personal information. I am just trying to understand the rules so that I can enjoy blue-light spotting safely and legally.

If any of these questions cannot be answered, please could you explain why and provide any information that can be released?

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police to locate information relevant to your request. I can confirm no information is held and GMP has no specific written policy or guidance relating to your request.

Information is defined in section 84 of the Act as 'information recorded in any form'. The Act therefore only extends to requests for recorded information. It does not require public authorities to answer questions generally; only if they already hold the answers in recorded form. The Act does not extend to requests for information about policies or their implementation, or the merits or demerits of any proposal or action - unless, of course, the answer to any such request is already held in recorded form.

You can find advice and relevant information at the below links available in the public domain:

[Drones | Greater Manchester Police](#)

[Where you can fly \(points 3 to 9\) | UK Civil Aviation Authority](#)

[Unmanned Aircraft System Operations in UK Airspace - Guidance](#)

[Professional | College of Policing](#)

[Media and communications | College of Policing](#)