



South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS
Foundation Trust
Nexus House
Gatwick Road
Crawley
RH10 9BG

Date 20th July 2017

Email:

Email:foi@secamb.nhs.uk

Dear,

I am writing in response to your enquiry under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) reference FOI/17/06/19.

You requested the following information, please also see our response below:

a)Why ambulances travelling through Birchington, routinely use audible warnings when not required? i.e. no vehicles impeding their travel. It appears that audible warnings are automatically actuated when approaching the Square in Birchington, (when travelling from the Margate direction) and when leaving the dual carriageway (approaching Birchington). This noise continues for the whole length of roadway through Birchington even when no vehicles are in front of the ambulance. Residents are having to put up with this unnecessary noise continually.

b)why, on occasions, for the length of the roadway between The Square and dual carriageway, are all possible combination of audible warnings used, i.e. Yelp, Wail, French two tone, American bull horn and white noise ?

All Trust vehicles that engage in an emergency response or transfer must be equipped with both sirens and emergency lights.

When Trust drivers use their exemption in relation to contravening red traffic lights, then both blue lights and siren must be used. During the hours of darkness, it may not be appropriate or necessary to use the sirens when negotiating hazards such as traffic lights; it is for the driver however to determine their appropriateness and balance their response based on prevailing traffic, road and weather conditions.

When Trust drivers claim an exemption for speed, i.e. driving above either the posted speed limit or of the prevailing traffic, then some form of auxiliary warning equipment must be used in all but the most exceptional circumstances and these decisions must be justified.

All staff are trained to use blue lights and sirens when responding as it is law that audible and visual warnings must be used when claiming any road traffic exemption while responding for exceeding

speed limits and going through red lights etc. However, some staff do use some discretion at certain times of the day.

Please bear in mind that whilst there may not appear to be any traffic in our immediate vicinity while we are responding, we have to use audible and visual warnings when approaching any potential hazard plus we also need to think about any approaching un-visible hazards such as pedestrians or cyclists and warn them of our immediate approach. Tones are cycled on occasions as the changing of the tones can sometimes be a more effective way of warning people who switch off to the normal sounding siren tone.

I hope you find this information of some assistance.

If for any reason you are dissatisfied with our response, kindly in the first instance contact Caroline Smart, Information Governance Manager via the following email address:

FOI@secamb.nhs.uk

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Coordinator
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust