



Information Policy and Compliance  
[bbc.co.uk/foi](http://bbc.co.uk/foi)

14<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Dear Mr

Freedom of information request – RFI2007000205

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”) dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007, seeking further information about TV Licensing. I have answered your specific question below.

*“Can you answer these questions, or take note of what I say -*

*1) I do not have a tv licence-(not had one for many years)*

*2) I can apply by writing/email that your salesmen (I think you call them enforcement officers) that they are obliged by law not to visit my home - I will not do this because i want to cost your company money (wasted visits*

*In the many many years that i have not had a tv licence- i have had (what you call a visit) i have told the thickos that crapita send,to get off my property, to I will remove you from the property very very quickly - The enforcement officers (salesmen) did remove theselves very quickly-(no backbone)*

*So my question to you is –*

*How can you prove that i watch live broadcasting in my home?”*

Below are some of the methods that TV Licensing use to detect whether someone is using a television or television receiving equipment:

- Key to the TV Licensing operation is the TV Licensing database. The database lists all the addresses in the UK which hold a valid TV licence as well as a list of those addresses which don't. To a certain extent the database enables the automation of TV Licensing enquiries and reminder letters.
- It is a legal requirement that television retailers must notify TV Licensing every time they sell or rent a television set. When TV Licensing receives this notification, they check their records to see whether a licence is already held in the name and address of the purchaser. If not, a reminder letter is sent to the purchaser reminding them to obtain a TV licence.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

- For those addresses where there is no record of a TV licence on our system and no recent information about whether a licence is needed, an enquiry letter is sent to the occupier simply asking about the situation. Many recipients may not have realised they were unlicensed or may hold a licence for a previous address, while others may not use television or may be deliberately avoiding payment. Where an address is unoccupied, a temporary guard from enquiries is applied until the address becomes occupied.
- Those people who do not obtain a licence or do not reply will continue to receive enquiry letters, which become increasingly urgent in tone. Eventually, the enquiries will result in a visit by one of TV Licensing's visiting officers. Officers will confirm if an address does or does not have a TV set or television receiving equipment.
- If visiting proves unsuccessful, we use detection equipment which is an effective part of TV Licensing's anti-evasion strategy. Detection equipment does rely on the television actually being in use at the time of the visit. Detection equipment takes as little as 20 seconds to work and can distinguish between two television sets close together on either side of a party wall. Our detection equipment is able to operate from up to 60m away.
- TV Licensing has a range of detection equipment which is an effective part of our anti-evasion strategy. Visiting officers make enquiries and where these are obstructed, they may also consider applying to the courts for a search warrant. As you may be aware, fines are issued by the courts.
- Detection technology is generally used to obtain search warrants. Once the search warrant has been obtained, the fine will be issued based on the search warrant being executed and evidence of unlicensed use of a television receiver found.

The BBC's policy on search warrants has been made public in the *About TV Licensing* document, which is available on this website:

<http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/aboutus/abouttvlicensing.jsp>.

This states that search warrants will only be obtained as a last resort in cases where access is refused.

### **Appeal rights**

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager. Please contact us at the address provided, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545 700 or go to: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely

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