

11 October 2023



Tēnā koe 

Thank you for your request to the Department of Conservation, received on 18 September 2023, in which you asked:

'I would like to get the statistics on how many cases of abuse have been recorded since January 1 2023.

To compare these figures can I also get the same stats for time period between January 1 2022 and December 31 2022.

I would also like to know the nature of these cases of abuse for example:

- * Were they verbal or physical?*
- * Were they made online or in person?*
- * Were they related to any particular subject e.g. 1080?*
- * Were they referred to Police?*
- * Were any death threats made?'*

We have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982.

Context

As context, we take any threats, harassment, intimidation or assault on our staff very seriously with a zero-tolerance approach taken. If an incident occurs we ensure that the impacted staff member is appropriately supported by colleagues and managers. We also ensure that access to external support services such as the employee assistance programme (EAP) is readily available.

Response

Your questions and our responses are listed below:

1. *How many cases of abuse have been recorded since January 1 2023.*

The table below shows the total number of cases of abuse reported by staff (by month) from 1 January 2023 to 31 August 2023



Incident Classification	External abuse or harassment	External assault	External threat	Threatening or aggressive driving	Total
JAN 23	5		1		6
FEB 23	9				9
MAR 23	5				5
APR 23	7		1	1	9
MAY 23	10		2		12
JUN 23	11	1	2		14
JUL 23	6		2		8
AUG 23	3		2		5
Total 2023	56	1	10	1	68

The table below shows the total number of cases of abuse reported by staff (by month) from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

Incident Classification	External abuse or harassment	External assault	External threat	Threatening or aggressive driving	Total
JAN 22	10		2		12
FEB 22	10	1	3		14
MAR 22	9		2		11
APR 22	6		2		8
MAY 22	7				7
JUN 22	1		1		2
JUL 22	6		4		10
AUG 22	6		1		7
SEP 22	8		1		9
OCT 22	8		3		11
NOV 22	13		1		14
DEC 22	8		1		9
Total 22	92	1	21		114

2. *Were they verbal or physical?*

The tables above provide a breakdown of the incidents over these periods. Data illustrates that the majority of incidents were non-physical in nature, however there were two assaults on staff during the periods shown.



3. *Were they made online or in person?*

Our staff have experienced both types of abuse and threats during these periods.

4. *Were they related to any particular subject e.g., 1080?*

There are a variety of subject related threats made against our staff. In some incidents anti-1080 sentiment is known to be a factor.

5. *Were they referred to Police?*

We do not keep a centralised record how many incidents are reported to Police. Every incident is reviewed on a case-by-case basis by local staff and a decision made on whether a referral to Police is appropriate. Incidents are usually reported locally to local Police. We take any threats, harassment, intimidation or assault on our staff very seriously and work closely with NZ Police.

This aspect of your request is subsequently declined via section 18(g) of the Official information Act as we do not hold the information sought.

6. *Were any death threats made?*

A small number of the incidents included death threats, both online and in person. We do not record when an incident involves a death threat, so we are unable to provide precise numbers.

This aspect of your request is subsequently declined via section 18(g) of the Official information Act as we do not hold the information sought.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Department's website.

[Redacted]

Nāku noa, nā

[Redacted]

Harry Maher
Director, Health Safety and Security
Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai