

# REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

## 1. Core Information [\[guidance\]](#)

Title and link to statistical output	<a href="#">Woodland Carbon Code Statistics: Data to June 2016</a>
Name of statistical producer	Forestry Commission
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Sheila Ward <a href="mailto:Sheila.ward@forestry.gsi.gov.uk">Sheila.ward@forestry.gsi.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 067 5236
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	
Date of report	14/7/17

## 2. Circumstances of breach [\[guidance\]](#)

Relevant principle/protocol and practice	Pre-release data shared with someone not on the pre-release list (Protocol 2, principle 7)
Date of occurrence of breach	12 July 2017
<p><i>Give an account of what has happened including roles of persons involved, dates, times etc</i>  <i>A member of FC/ Defra Communications team circulated draft lines to take for this release in the same document as the draft lines to take for another Official Statistics release (due to go out on the same day) to colleagues within the Forestry Commission who were on the pre-release access list for the other release.</i></p>	

## 3. Impact of the breach [\[guidance\]](#)

<p><i>Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally</i>  <i>The draft lines to take were circulated to 5 people who were not on the pre-release access list</i></p> <p><i>The error was identified quickly by the Lead Statistician and corrective action taken, with an email sent to recipients asking them to delete the original document and to provide a replacement document (with information on the release they did not have PRA for deleted). As the subject matter was not considered to be of interest to those recipients, they were not specifically asked to confirm deletion of the original document (although one did).</i></p> <p><i>There was minimal impact within the Forestry Commission, with further correspondence only related to the relevant release. There was no external impact.</i></p>
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## 4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence [\[guidance\]](#)

<p><i>Describe the short-term actions made to redress the situation and the longer term changes to procedures etc</i>  <i>The error was spotted within 30 minutes of the email being sent and a further email, asking recipients to delete the original, was issued immediately.</i></p> <p><i>Discussion with the person who issued the original document has indicated that this was a purely accidental breach and that they understood pre-release access procedures. As a result, consideration will be given to scheduling unrelated outputs for release on different days, to minimise the opportunity for confusion between multiple outputs with different (but overlapping) pre-release access lists.</i></p> <p><i>Opportunities for further improvements will be considered as part of an ongoing process.</i></p>
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## Guidance on completing the template

If any further guidance is needed, please contact the Good Practice Team via email in the first instance: [goodpracticeteam@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:goodpracticeteam@statistics.gov.uk)

### 1. Core Information

Please provide the name and contact details of the person who would be best placed to deal with any correspondence relating to the breach.

Published statements about the breach may not be available at the time of reporting, in which case this box can be left blank.

### 2. Circumstances of breach

Please indicate which part of the Code of Practice the breach relates to e.g. 'Principle 2, practice 3' or 'Protocol 2, principle 4'. This will help us to monitor which parts of the Code the most common breaches relate to.

Provide details of the nature and circumstances of breach in a way that would be clear to a user of the statistics. This should clearly identify how and why the breach occurred, and include references to previous breaches in the same area (where relevant).

The level of detail needed is likely to depend on the exact circumstances, but for minor breaches (e.g. related to minor delays to publication) brief details will be sufficient.

### 3. Impact of the breach

Please give brief details of the impact of the breach, covering impacts both inside and outside the producer body.

The information supplied will depend on the type of breach, but for example where the breach relates to accidental or wrongful release useful information might include the number of people accessing the statistics, and whether any press reports were published before the official release.

### 4. Corrective actions

Please provide as much detail as possible to help users and the Authority to understand how the breach has been addressed.

Appropriate actions will depend on the circumstances and severity of the breach; as a guide, some examples of considerations and suitable actions for the most common types of breach are below

<b>Accidental or wrongful early release (Protocol 2, principle 8)</b>	
<p>Things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How sensitive are the statistics and how long is it before the scheduled publication date?</li><li>• How many people are likely to have accessed the statistics?</li><li>• Has pre-release access to the statistics been restricted? Should you ask people with pre-release access not to disclose or discuss the statistics until further notice?</li></ul>	<p>Possible corrective actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Withdraw the data as soon as possible.</li><li>• Bring forward the time of the general release.</li><li>• Issue a statement on your organisation's website alerting users to the problem.</li></ul>
<b>Pre-release data shared with someone not on the pre-release list (Protocol 2, principle 7)</b>	

<p>Things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many people received the statistics in error and who?</li> <li>• Are the statistics high profile or market sensitive?</li> <li>• How long have the recipients had access to the data before the error was discovered?</li> <li>• Have the recipients shared or discussed the data with others?</li> <li>• Can the offending email or statistics be recalled or deleted?</li> <li>• Was the correct security marking applied to the pre-release access email?</li> </ul>	<p>Possible corrective actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recall the data.</li> <li>• If the statistics have been forwarded by somebody that was eligible to receive pre-release access, consider removing their pre-release access.</li> <li>• Remind staff about correct pre-release protocol.</li> <li>• Strengthen the wording of all text accompanying pre-release material.</li> <li>• Consider further training to educate staff on their obligations under the Code of Practice.</li> <li>• Increased management control of the processes.</li> <li>• Should stronger words be used in the text that is sent out with pre-release access?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Statistics published after the required time of 9.30am (Protocol 2, principle 4)</b></p>	
<p>Things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How sensitive are the statistics and how long is the delay likely to be?</li> <li>• Has pre-release access to the statistics been restricted? Should you ask people with pre-release access not to disclose or discuss the statistics until further notice?</li> <li>• Can social media channels be used to acknowledge or apologise for the delay?</li> </ul>	<p>Possible corrective actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider emailing key users a copy of the release.</li> <li>• Issue a statement on your organisation's website alerting users to the problem</li> <li>• Consider whether there is another way to publish the release.</li> </ul>