

Boris Johnson's banned water cannon costing taxpayers £25,000 a year to maintain and insure

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The three water cannon bought by [Boris Johnson](#) are costing more than £25,000 a year to insure and maintain – despite never being fired.

The London mayor snapped up the three second-hand Wasserwerfer 9000 [riot](#) trucks from the German federal police in 2014 for £218,000.

But the water cannon - which cost £23,573 to re-paint in the colours of the [Metropolitan Police](#) - are not allowed to be used on Britain's streets.

Home Secretary [Theresa May](#) last year refused to authorise their by any police force on mainland Britain - in a direct snub to Johnson.

It can now be revealed that as well as the expensive initial outlay and repainting costs, the 28-year-old trucks are costing more than £25,000 a year to insure and maintain.

A Freedom of Information request to the Met Police found that the annual cost of maintaining the three vehicles was £20,800 - or £6,960 each.

The cost of insuring them comes out at £4,818 a year - £1,606 each.

The Freedom of Information request also reveals how the water cannon have never been driven on public roads and are only moved 'once a year' for road worthiness tests.

The Home Secretary told MPs last year that her decision followed 'exhaustive medical and scientific tests' which led her to conclude that the cannon had the potential to cause serious injuries.

She also raised doubts over their usefulness during riots and said they were 'likely to damage' the British tradition of 'policing by consent'.

Speaking after her ruling, Johnson said: "We will keep these devices in reserve and should there be another occasion when they might be a useful tool of crowd control, the Metropolitan Police commissioner can make another application."

The Met police said it was "naturally disappointed" by May's refusal to allow forces to use water cannon.

The 29-tonne vehicles - which can carry 9,000 litres of water and can shoot water at the rate of 1,100 litres per second at targets 65metres away - were delivered to the Met police in June 2014.

Known as the WaWe 9, the water cannon is so powerful it can rip the clothes off protestors and has been known to blind people.

Craig Phillips, 45, of Hackney, said: "What a waste of money having these three water cannon sitting idle in a garage somewhere.

"We are paying to insure and maintain them despite them not being allowed on the streets - the whole thing is a farce, an expensive farce."