



# The Attorney General of Texas

December 31, 1982

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Mr. John C. West, Jr.  
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Texas Department of Public Safety  
P. O. Box 4087  
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Open Records Decision No. 341

Re: Whether numbers on Texas driver's license representing Department of Public Safety station which issues license are open to public

Dear Mr. West:

Recently issued Texas driver's licenses contain an eleven digit number known as the "DPS Code." We are informed that the various digits in this code signify the year, the date on which the licensee applied for the license, the Department of Public Safety [hereinafter DPS] driver's license office which issued the license, the camera which was used to photograph the licensee, and the particular frame on the roll of film in which the licensee appears.

You have received a request under the Open Records Act, article 6252-17a, V.T.C.S., for:

a list of the addresses of each Department of Public Safety station for the issuance of Texas Driver's Licenses together with the corresponding code designation which identifies said station within the above mentioned DPS Code.

You contend that this information is protected from required disclosure by section 3(a)(8) of the act, which excepts:

records of law enforcement agencies that deal with the detection and investigation of crime and the internal records and notations of such law enforcement agencies which are maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement.

In your letter to this office, you stated:

[T]he information in question is utilized by commissioned officers of [DPS] in ascertaining

whether or not a particular driver's license is duly issued by [DPS].... [T]he numbers now sought are unique to each driver's license. As a part of the code, the identifiers are utilized to indicate which station issued a license. This identifier conveys to a member of this [d]epartment certain information that he may utilize to determine if the license is a forgery.... [I]f an individual had access to those numbers... it would diminish significantly the possibilities of detecting a forgery or fictitious license through utilization of the code. For example, certain numbers that would be utilized in the three spaces of code indicating the station identifier, would be impossible numbers, as we do not have stations number[ed] in that particular manner....

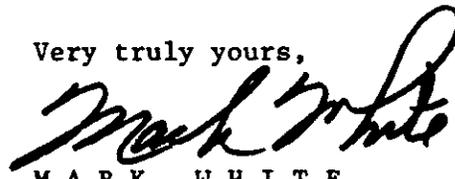
In summary, it [is] our position that this unique number, if made available generally, would give undue advantage to an individual who desired to forge and/or counterfeit Texas drivers' licenses.

Section 32 of article 6687b, V.T.C.S., makes it unlawful for any person to possess a fictitious driver's license. A violation of this section constitutes a misdemeanor. V.T.C.S. art. 6687b, §44.

As our prior Open Records Decisions indicate, see, e.g., Open Records Decision Nos. 313 (1982); 287 (1981), the Texas Supreme Court appears to have taken the position that information may be withheld under section 3(a)(8) if its release would unduly interfere with law enforcement. See Ex parte Pruitt, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). In our opinion, this standard has been met in this instance.

We believe that the release of the addresses of the DPS driver's license stations and their corresponding code numbers would significantly hamper DPS in its efforts to detect license forgeries. If this information is made available to the public, the department will lose one of its most effective means of detecting forgeries. We therefore conclude that section 3(a)(8) authorizes you to deny the request for this information.

Very truly yours,



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