



Office of the Attorney General  
State of Texas

DAN MORALES  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

April 18, 1997

Ms. Lan P. Nguyen  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Houston  
Legal Department  
P.O. Box 1562  
Houston, Texas 77251-1562

OR97-0882

Dear Ms. Nguyen:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Open Records Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 105872.

The City of Houston (the "city") received a request for "all 'trouble tickets' and housekeeping/maintenance records for the forty-eight hours preceding this incident, which may in any way, relate to Mr. Philpott's accident." You assert that the requested information is excepted from required public disclosure based on section 552.103 of the Government Code.

Section 552.103(a) of the Government Code reads as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information:

(1) relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature or settlement negotiations, to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party; and

(2) that the attorney general or the attorney of the political subdivision has determined should be withheld from public inspection.

To secure the protection of section 552.103(a), a governmental body must demonstrate that requested information "relates" to a pending or reasonably anticipated judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding. Open Records Decision No. 588 (1991). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the applicability of an exception in a particular situation. The test for establishing that section 552.103 applies is a two-prong showing that (1) litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210 (Tex. App.--Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.).

You inform us that the city received what you say is a notice of claim under the Texas Tort Claims Act for personal injury damages allegedly sustained in a trip-and-fall incident at the Houston Intercontinental Airport. For this reason, you state that the city reasonably anticipates litigation. We conclude that you have made the requisite showing that the city reasonably anticipates litigation for purposes of section 552.103(a). See Open Records Decision No. 638 (1996). We also agree that the requested information relates to the anticipated litigation. The city may withhold the requested information from the requestor based on section 552.103 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

We are resolving this matter with this informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue under the facts presented to us in this request and may not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,



Kay Guajardo  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KHG/rho

Ref.: ID# 105872

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<sup>1</sup>If the opposing party in the litigation has seen or had access to any of the information in these records, there would be no justification for now withholding that information from the requestor pursuant to section 552.103(a). Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). In addition, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation is concluded. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).

Enclosures: Submitted documents

cc: Ms. Melinda L. Wesner  
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