

January 7, 1999



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF TEXAS

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Ms. Lilia Ledesma
Assistant City Attorney
City of McAllen
P.O. Box 220
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OR99-0035

Dear Ms. Ledesma:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 120854.

The McAllen Police Department (the "department") received a request for report number 98-30385. You claim that the requested information is excepted from required public disclosure by section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and have reviewed the documents at issue.

Section 552.108 of the Government Code provides in part:

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021 if:

(1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime;

(2) it is information that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication; or

(3) it is information that:

(A) is prepared by an attorney representing the state in anticipation of or in the course of preparing for criminal litigation;

(B) reflects the mental impressions or legal reasoning of an attorney representing the state.

* * *

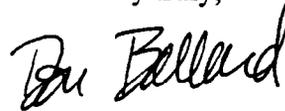
(c) This section does not except from the requirements of Section 552.021 information that is basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.

Gov't Code § 552.108. Generally, a governmental body claiming an exception under section 552.108 must reasonably explain, if the information does not supply the explanation on its face, how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(a)(1), (b)(1), .301(b)(1); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You indicate that the requested information concerns an ongoing criminal investigation. It appears that the case is currently under criminal investigation. We find that you have shown that the release of the requested information would interfere with the detection, investigation or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.--Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases); Open Records Decision No. 216 (1978). Thus, we conclude that the requested information may be withheld under section 552.108(a)(1). We note, however, that information normally found on the front page of an offense report is generally considered public. *Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.--Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976); Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976). Thus, you must release the type of information that is considered to be front page offense report information, even if this information is not actually located on the front page of the offense report. Gov't Code § 552.108(c); *see* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing the types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*).

We are resolving this matter with an 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 should not be relied upon as

a previous determination regarding any other records.¹ If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,



Don Ballard
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JDB\nc

Ref: ID# 120854

Enclosures: Submitted documents

cc: Ms. Sylvia Hurtado
4912 West Pecan
McAllen, Texas 78501
(w/o enclosures)

¹We note, nonetheless, that the department's Public Information Request form states that police reports are two dollars a page and photographs are seventy-five cents each. Generally, the charges for providing public information are established by the General Services Commission. Gov't Code § 552.262(a) (governmental body may determine its own charges but shall not charge an amount greater than 25 percent more than the amount established by the General Services Commission unless granted an exemption); 1 T.A.C. 111.61 - .70. We suggest that you contact the Open Records Administrator for the General Services Commission to resolve any costs issues. See Gov't Code § 552.262; *see also* Gov't Code §§ 552.261-.273.