



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 8, 2004

Ms. Elaine S Hengen
Assistant City Attorney
City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza, 9th Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901-1196

OR2004-1762

Dear Ms. Hengen:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 199759.

The City of El Paso Police Department (the "department") received two requests for information concerning a certain incident. You state that the department has released a copy of the incident report, the complaint affidavit and a redacted copy of the CAD printout. You claim that the remaining requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

You raise section 552.108 for exhibit B. Section 552.108(a) excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain 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(e)(1)(a); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the requested information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based upon this representation, we conclude that the release of the 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).

We note, however, that information normally found on the front page of an offense report is generally considered public. *See generally* Gov't Code § 552.108(c); *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 types of information that are considered to be front page offense report information, even if this information is not actually located on the front page of the offense report. Although section 552.108(a)(1) authorizes you to withhold the remaining information from disclosure, you may choose to release all or part of the information at issue that is not otherwise confidential by law. *See* Gov't Code § 552.007.

You raise sections 552.101 and 552.130 for portions of exhibit C. You raise section 552.101 for the address and telephone number in the printout. Section 552.101 of the Government Code protects “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” You bring your section 552.101 claim in conjunction with section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code. You state that the city in conjunction with the El Paso County 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District (the “district”) maintains a system for taking emergency calls and responding to those cases. You state that the district was established in accordance with section 772.301 of the Health and Safety Code. Section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code makes confidential the originating telephone numbers and addresses of 911 callers furnished by a service supplier. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 (1996). Section 772.318 applies to emergency communication districts for counties with a population over 20,000. Thus, as you state that the district here is subject to section 772.318, the originating telephone numbers and addresses are excepted from public disclosure based on section 552.101 as information deemed confidential by statute.

You raise section 552.130 for the Texas license plate number in the CAD printout. Section 552.130 provides in relevant part:

(a) Information is excepted from the requirement of Section 552.021 if the information relates to:

- (1) a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state; [or]
- (2) a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state[.]

Thus, you must withhold the Texas license plate number under section 552.130.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code

§ 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kay Hastings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kay" being more prominent.

Kay Hastings
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KH/seg

Ref: ID# 199759

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. George Baylor, III
7517 Pear Tree Lane
Fort Worth, Texas 76133
(w/o enclosures)

Ms. Yvonne Suarez
KVIA-TV 7
4140 Rio Bravo
El Paso, Texas 79902
(w/o enclosures)