



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 11, 2004

Mr. James M. Frazier III
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 4004
Huntsville, Texas 77342

OR2004-1861

Dear Mr. Frazier:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 197442.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request from an applicant for copies of the interview questions and recommended answers for two positions offered by the department, along with the comments and critique of his interview. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.117 and 552.122 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

You claim that the submitted information is subject to section 552.122 of the Government Code. Section 552.122(b) excepts from disclosure test items developed by a licensing agency or governmental body. In Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994), this office determined that the term "test item" in section 552.122 includes any standard means by which an individual's or group's knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated, but does not encompass evaluations of an employee's overall job performance or suitability. Whether information falls within the section 552.122 exception must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Open Records Decision No. 626 at 6 (1994). Traditionally, this office has applied section 552.122 where release of "test items" might compromise the effectiveness of future examinations. *Id.* at 4-5; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 118 (1976). Additionally, when answers to test questions might reveal the questions themselves, the answers may be withheld under section 552.122(b). *See* Open Records Decision No. 626 at 8 (1994). Based on our review of the submitted documents, it appears that you contend the submitted interview questions, recommended answers, and applicant's answers are excepted from disclosure under section 552.122(b) of the Government Code. After

reviewing your arguments and the information, we agree that interview questions 1, 2 and 5 from the Hughes unit, and interview questions 2, 4 and 5 from the Holliday unit test an individual's knowledge in a particular area and thus constitute "test items" as contemplated by section 552.122(b). Accordingly, the department may withhold interview questions 1, 2 and 5 from the Hughes unit, interview questions 2, 4 and 5 from the Holliday unit, the corresponding recommended responses, and the applicant's answers to these questions pursuant to section 552.122(b) of the Government Code. We find, however, that questions 3 and 4 from the Hughes unit, and 1, 3 and 6 from the Holliday unit are not test items for purposes of section 552.122. Thus, the department may not withhold questions 3 and 4 from the Hughes unit, questions 1, 3 and 6 from the Holliday unit, or the submitted responses corresponding to those questions, pursuant to section 552.122 of the Government Code.

Additionally, you argue that the submitted documents contain personal information subject to section 552.117(a)(3) of the Government Code, which excepts the home address and telephone number, social security number, and family member information of a department employee. We note, however, that the personal information to which you refer relates to the requestor. In accordance with section 552.023 of the Government Code, the requestor has a special right of access to personal information that would be excepted from public disclosure under provisions designed to protect his privacy. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023.¹ Therefore, information about the requestor that is subject to section 552.117 must be released to him.

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

¹Because this information is confidential with respect to the general public, if the department receives a future request for this information from an individual other than the requestor or his authorized representative, the department should again seek our decision.

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,



Lauren E. Kleine
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

LEK/seg

Ref: ID# 197442

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: requestor
(w/o enclosures)