



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
G R E G A B B O T T

July 27, 2007

Ms. Judith S. Rawls  
Assistant City Attorney  
Beaumont Police Department  
P.O. Box 3827  
Beaumont, Texas 77704-3827

OR2007-09542

Dear Ms. Rawls:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID#285050.

The Beaumont Police Department (the "department") received a request for a call log pertaining to a specified incident report. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of Government Code excepts from public disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This exception encompasses information that other statutes make confidential. Chapter 772 of the Health and Safety Code authorizes the development of local emergency communications districts. Sections 772.118, 772.218 and 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code are applicable to emergency 911 districts established in accordance with chapter 772. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 (1996). These sections make the originating telephone numbers and addresses of 911 callers that are furnished by a service supplier confidential. *Id.* at 2. Section 772.118 applies to an emergency communication district for a county with a population of more than two million. Section 772.218 applies to an emergency communication district for a county with a population of more than 860,000.

Section 772.318 applies to an emergency communication district for a county with a population of more than 20,000.

You seek to withhold information relating to 911 callers under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 772.318. You do not inform us, however, whether the information in question was provided by a 911 service supplier or whether the City of Beaumont (the “city”) is part of an emergency communication district established under section 772.318. Nevertheless, if the city is part of such a district and if the information in question was provided by a 911 service supplier, then the department must withhold the originating addresses and telephone numbers of 911 callers under section 552.101 of the Government Code. But if the city is not part of such a district, or if the information in question was not provided by a 911 service supplier, then the originating addresses and telephone numbers of 911 callers are not confidential under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 772.318. In that event, we will address your argument under section 552.108 of the Government Code for this information as well as the rest of the submitted information.

Section 552.108 excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime.” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). 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 id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). In this instance, you state that the submitted information pertains to a pending prosecution being conducted in municipal court and that release of the information would interfere with the prosecution of the crime. Based upon this representation and our review, we conclude that the release of the remaining 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).

However, section 552.108 of the Government Code does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. Thus, with the exception of basic front page offense and arrest information, the department may withhold the remaining information based on section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, to the extent the city is part of an emergency communication district established under section 772.318 and the information at issue was provided by a 911 service supplier, the originating addresses and telephone numbers of 911 callers must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code. With the exception of basic information which

must be released, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, 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).

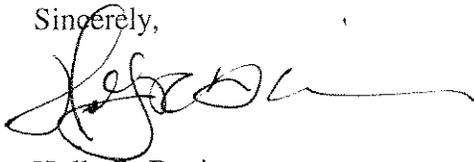
Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging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

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. 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 'Holly R. Davis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Holly R. Davis  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

HRD/eeg

Ref: ID# 285050

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms Crystal Kerr  
Progressive  
c/o Judith S. Rawls  
Assistant City Attorney  
Beaumont Police Department  
P.O. Box 3827  
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(w/o enclosures)