



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

September 5, 2007

Ms. Nancy O. Williams  
Senior Assistant City Attorney  
City of Irving  
825 West Irving Boulevard  
Irving, Texas 75060

OR2007-11538

Dear Ms. Williams:

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# 289336.

The Irving Fire Department (the "department") received a request for the name, address, and phone number of paramedic number 4 and a copy of his report pertaining to a specified incident. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.117 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses confidentiality provisions such as section 773.091 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides in part:

(b) Records of the identity, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by emergency medical services personnel or by a physician providing medical supervision that are created by the emergency medical services personnel or physician or maintained by an emergency medical services provider are confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

...

(g) The privilege of confidentiality under this section does not extend to information regarding the presence, nature of injury or illness, age, sex, occupation, and city of residence of a patient who is receiving emergency medical services. . . .

Health & Safety Code § 773.091(b), (g). Thus, except for the information specified in section 773.091(g), EMS records are deemed confidential under section 773.091 and, therefore, may only be released in accordance with chapter 773 of the Health and Safety Code. *See id.* §§ 773.091-.094. We note, however, that records that are confidential under section 773.091 may be disclosed to “any person who bears a written consent of the patient or other persons authorized to act on the patient’s behalf for the release of confidential information.” *Id.* §§ 773.092(e)(4), .093. Among the individuals authorized to act on the patient’s behalf in providing written consent is a “personal representative” if the patient is deceased. *Id.* Section 773.093 provides that a consent for release of EMS records must specify (1) the information or records to be covered by the release; (2) the reasons or purpose for the release; and (3) the person to whom the information is to be released. The submitted report is subject to chapter 773 of the Health and Safety Code. Thus, the department must withhold the submitted report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 773.091 of the Health and Safety Code, except as specified by section 773.091(g).<sup>1</sup> However, the department must release the submitted report on receipt of proper consent under section 773.093. *See id.* §§ 773.092, .093.

You claim that the requested home address and telephone number are excepted from public disclosure under section 552.117 of the Government Code. Section 552.117(a)(1) excepts from disclosure the home addresses and telephone numbers, social security numbers, and family member information of current or former officials or employees of a governmental body who request that this information be kept confidential under section 552.024 of the Government Code. *See Gov’t Code* § 552.117(a)(1). Whether a particular piece of information is public must be determined at the time the request for it is made. *See Open Records Decision No. 530 at 5 (1989)*. In this case, you state that the employee whose personal information is at issue timely elected confidentiality under section 552.024 prior to the receipt of the request for information. Thus, you must withhold the information at issue under section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the submitted EMS report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 773.091 of the Health and Safety Code, except as specified by section 773.091(g). However, the department must release the EMS report on receipt of proper consent under section 773.093. The department must withhold the requested home address and telephone number under section 552.117.

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

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

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.

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,



Melanie J. Villars  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MJV/jb

Ref: ID# 289336

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Gloria Lay  
Legal Assistant  
516 West Main Street  
Waxahachie, Texas 75165  
(w/o enclosures)