



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 8, 2007

Ms. P. Armstrong
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Division
City of Dallas
1400 South Lamar
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2007-14635

Dear Ms. Armstrong

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# 298266.

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information relating to a specified service number. You claim that some of the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and have reviewed the information you submitted.¹

Section 552.108 of the Government Code 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). A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You have marked the information that the department seeks to withhold under section 552.108. You state that the information in question is related to a pending prosecution. Based on your representation, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is generally applicable in this instance. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th

¹This letter ruling assumes that the submitted representative sample of information is truly representative of the requested information as a whole. This ruling neither reaches nor authorizes the department to withhold any information that is substantially different from the submitted information. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(e)(1)(D), .302; Open Records Decision Nos. 499 at 6 (1988), 497 at 4 (1988).

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 section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(e) refers to the basic front-page information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88. Basic information includes, among other things, the name, age, address, race, sex, occupation, alias, Social Security number, police department identification number, and physical condition of an arrested person and a detailed description of the offense. See Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). The department must release basic information in accordance with section 552.108(c), even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. The department may withhold the rest of the marked information under section 552.108(a)(1).

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state. See Gov’t Code § 552.130(a)(2). We agree that the Texas motor vehicle information that you have marked must be withheld under section 552.130.

In summary: (1) except for the basic information that must be released under section 552.108(c), the department may withhold the information that you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code; and (2) the department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle information that you have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The rest of the submitted information must be released.

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

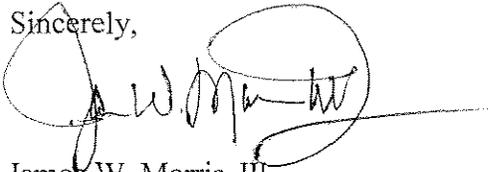
statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental 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.

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 'J.W. Morris, III', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

James W. Morris, III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JWM/ma

Ref: ID# 298266

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Ms. Mary Johnson
4716 South Hampton Road #5D
Dallas, Texas 75232
(w/o enclosures)