



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

January 22, 2008

Ms. Nicole B. Webster  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Waco  
P.O. Box 2570  
Waco, Texas 76702-2570

OR2008-00963

Dear Ms. Webster:

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# 304164.

The Waco Police Department (the "department") received a request for information involving a specified address and time interval. You inform us that some of the requested information is being released. You claim that other responsive information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and have reviewed the information you submitted.

Section 552.101 of 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 exception encompasses information made confidential by statute. Chapter 772 of the Health and Safety Code authorizes the development of local emergency communication 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 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 inform us that the City of Waco is part of an emergency communication district established under section 772.318. You have highlighted telephone numbers of 911 callers in Exhibit 3 that the department seeks to withhold. To the extent that the telephone numbers in question were furnished by a 911 service supplier, we agree that they must be withheld from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 772.318 of the Health and Safety Code.

We next note that Exhibit 4 contains an accident report form that appears to have been completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). Section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code states that except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential. *See id.* § 550.065(b). Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of an accident report to a person who provides two of the following three items of information: (1) the date of the accident; (2) the name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) the specific location of the accident. *See id.* § 550.065(c)(4). Under this provision, the Texas Department of Transportation or another governmental entity is required to release a copy of an accident report to a person who provides the agency with two or more of the items of information specified by the statute. *Id.* In this instance, the requestor has not provided the department with two of the three specified items of information. Therefore, the department must withhold the submitted accident report pursuant to section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code.

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 must reasonably explain how and why section 552.108 is applicable to information that it seeks to withhold under this exception. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the remaining information in Exhibit 4 is related to pending investigations. Based on your representation, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable in this instance. *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).

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(c) refers to the basic front-page information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88. The department must release basic information, including detailed descriptions of the offenses, even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest

report. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). The department may withhold the rest of the information in Exhibit 4 under section 552.108(a)(1).

In summary: (1) the department must withhold the highlighted telephone numbers of 911 callers in Exhibit 3 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 772.318 of the Health & Safety Code to the extent they were furnished by a 911 service supplier; (2) the department must withhold the accident report in Exhibit 4 under section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code; and (3) the department may withhold the remaining information in Exhibit 4 under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code, except for the basic information that must be released under section 552.108(c).<sup>1</sup> 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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, 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).

---

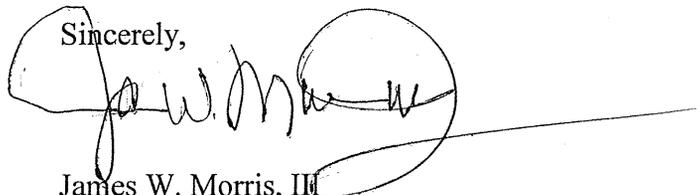
<sup>1</sup>We note that the submitted information contains a social security number. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act.

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can challenge 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 "James W. Morris, III". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a large, hand-drawn circle. A long horizontal line extends from the right side of the signature across the page.

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

JWM/ma

Ref: ID# 304164

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. Edward McElyea  
1411-J North Valley Mills #350  
Waco, Texas 76710  
(w/o enclosures)