



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 27, 2008

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

OR2008-07155

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# 315411.

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for incident report number 0097817-V and accident report number 97817V. You claim that portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.147 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information. We have also received comments from the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (providing that interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

Initially, we note that the submitted information contains a CRB-3 accident report form that was completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). Section 550.065(b) states that except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential. Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident. *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 pieces of information specified by the statute. *Id.* The requestor has not provided the department with two of the three pieces of information; thus, the department must withhold the accident report under section 550.065(b).

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 state that report number 0097817-V pertains to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representation, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to this report. *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). Thus, you may withhold the marked portions of report number 0097817-V under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

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 id.* § 552.130(a)(2). We agree that the department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle information that you have marked under section 552.130. We have marked additional Texas motor vehicle record information that must be withheld under section 552.130.

Finally, you assert that some of the remaining information is excepted under section 552.147 of the Government Code, which provides that “[t]he social security number of a living person is excepted from” required public disclosure under the Act. Gov’t Code § 552.147. We agree that the department may withhold the social security number that you have marked under section 552.147.¹

In summary, the department may withhold the submitted CRB-3 report under section under section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. The department must withhold the marked portions of report number 0097817-V under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the marked Texas motor vehicle information under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department may withhold the social security number that you have marked under section 552.147 of the Government Code. The remaining 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

¹We note that 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.

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).

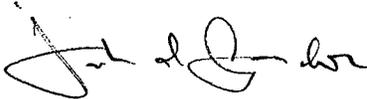
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records 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).

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,



Justin D. Gordon
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JDG/eeg

Ref: ID# 315411

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Bruce Johnson
Johnson & Silver, LLP
12720 Hillcrest Road, Suite 280
Dallas, Texas 75230
(w/o enclosures)