



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

May 4, 2009

Ms. Patricia Merkich  
Records Supervisor  
Edinburg Police Department  
1702 South Closner Boulevard  
Edinburg, Texas 78539

OR2009-05913

Dear Ms. Merkich:

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# 341810.

The Edinburg Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified traffic accident and arrest report. You state you have released some of the submitted information to the requestor. You claim that portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 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 that is considered to be confidential under other constitutional, statutory, or decisional law. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 600 at 4 (1992) (constitutional privacy), 478 at 2 (1987) (statutory confidentiality), 611 at 1 (1992) (common-law privacy). In this instance, you have not directed our attention to any law under which any of the information you have marked is considered to be confidential for the purposes of section 552.101. We therefore conclude that the department may not withhold any of the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Section 552.108 provides in pertinent part:

(a) Information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

(1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime; [or]

(2) it is information that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication;

...

(b) An internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

(1) release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution; [or]

(2) the internal record or notation relates to law enforcement only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication[.]

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1)-(2), (b)(1)-(2). A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the exception it claims is applicable to the information the governmental body seeks to withhold. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You represent that the submitted information is related to a pending prosecution. 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). You may withhold the information you have marked pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code.

We note that the submitted information contains Texas motor vehicle record information that is subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if the information relates to:

(1) a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state;

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<sup>1</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).*

(2) a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state; or

(3) a personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or a local agency authorized to issue an identification document.

Gov't Code § 552.130(a). Thus, the department must withhold the Texas driver's license numbers, license plate numbers, vehicle identification numbers, and registration years that we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The Texas driver's license numbers, license plate numbers, vehicle identification numbers, and registration years that we have marked must be withheld pursuant to section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining submitted information must be released to the requestor.<sup>2</sup>

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information 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 information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index\\_orl.php](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Karen E. Stack  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KES/jb

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<sup>2</sup>The information being released includes the Texas driver's license number and license plate number of an individual for whom the requestor is the authorized representative. The requestor has a right of access to the Texas driver's license and license plate information belonging to his client under section 552.023 of the Government Code. See Gov't Code § 552.023(a); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when an individual or authorized representative asks governmental body to provide information concerning that individual). However, if the department receives another request for this particular information from a different requestor, the department should again seek a decision from this office.

Ref: ID# 341810

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)