



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 27, 2010

Mr. John C. West
General Counsel
Office of Inspector General
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 13084
Austin, Texas 78711-3084

OR2010-07769

Dear Mr. West:

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# 380719 (OIG Open Records 2010-00054).

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for records pertaining to investigations during a specified time period that pertain to a specified inmate. The department states that it will release some of the requested information to the requestor with redactions pursuant to the previous determination issued by this office in Open Records Letter No. 2005-01067 (2005).¹ The department also states it will redact social security numbers pursuant to section 552.147 of the Government Code.² The department claims that the remaining requested information is excepted from disclosure under

¹Open Records Letter No. 2005-01067 serves as a previous determination that the present and former home addresses and telephone numbers, social security numbers, and family member information of current or former employees of the department, regardless of whether the current or former employee complies with section 552.1175 of the Government Code, are excepted from disclosure under section 552.117(a)(3) of the Government Code.

²We note that section 552.147(b) 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.

sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.134 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.134(a) of the Government Code relates to inmates and former inmates of the department and provides in relevant part the following:

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) or by Section 552.029 [of the Government Code], information obtained or maintained by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the department.

Gov't Code § 552.134(a). Section 552.134 is explicitly made subject to section 552.029, which provides in relevant part the following:

Notwithstanding Section 508.313 or 552.134, the following information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice is subject to required disclosure under Section 552.021:

...

(8) basic information regarding the death of an inmate in custody, an incident involving the use of force, or an alleged crime involving the inmate.

Id. § 552.029(8). Upon review, we agree that section 552.134 of the Government Code is applicable to the submitted information. However, we note that the information at issue relates to the death of an inmate in custody and an alleged crime involving inmates. We note, and you acknowledge, that basic information about this incident must be released pursuant to section 552.029. *Id.* For purposes of section 552.029(8), basic information includes the time and place of the incident, the names of inmates and of department employees who were involved, a brief narrative of the incident, a brief description of any injuries sustained by anyone involved, and information regarding any criminal charges or disciplinary actions that were filed as a result of the incident. With the exception of basic information, the remaining information must be withheld pursuant to section 552.134 of the Government Code.³

³As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure.

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, 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, toll free at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Tamara H. Holland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

THH/jb

Ref: ID# 380719

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)