



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 29, 2010

Ms. Martha T. Williams
Olson & Olson, L.L.P.
For City of Cleveland
2727 Allen Parkway, Suite 600
Houston, Texas 77019

OR2010-16411

Dear Ms. Williams:

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# 398468.

The City of Cleveland Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for information related to a specified traffic fatality. You state some information has been or will be released. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.103, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information contains a CR-3 crash report form 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) or subsection (e), accident reports are privileged and confidential. *Id.* § 550.065(b). 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) the date of the accident; (2) the name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) the specific location of the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). In this instance, the requestor has provided the department with the required information specified by the statute. Although you contend the CR-3 accident report form is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code, we note the general exceptions found in the Act generally do not apply to information made public by other statutes. *See* Open Records Decision No. 525 (1989) (statutory predecessor).

Accordingly, the department must release the submitted CR-3 accident report form in its entirety pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code.

Section 552.108(a)(1) 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.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the remaining information relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based upon your representation and our review, we find that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the remaining information. *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).

We note 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; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.¹

In summary, the department must release the CR-3 crash report under section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

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

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining arguments against disclosure for this information, except to note that basic information may generally not be withheld from public disclosure under section 552.103. Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991).

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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennifer Burnett", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jennifer Burnett
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JB/dls

Ref: ID# 398468

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)