



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

November 19, 2010

Mr. Ronald J. Bounds  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Corpus Christi  
P.O. Box 9277  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78469-9277

OR2010-17569

Dear Mr. Bounds:

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# 400625.

The City of Corpus Christi (the "city") received a request for a named individual's phone, e-mail, and text records and correspondence from August 1, 2009 through September 8, 2010. You state you are releasing some information to the requestor. You claim that portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.137 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. The types of information considered to be intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* include information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders,

attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. In addition, this office has found certain kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses are excepted from required public disclosure under common-law privacy. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 470 (1987), 455 (1987) (information pertaining to prescription drugs, specific illnesses, operations and procedures, and physical disabilities protected from disclosure). Upon review, we agree the information you have marked is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate interest to the public. Thus, the city must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

We note that section 552.117 of the Government Code may be applicable to some of the remaining information.<sup>1</sup> Section 552.117(a)(1) excepts from disclosure the current and former home addresses and telephone numbers, social security numbers, and family member information of current or former officials or employees of a governmental body who request that this information be kept confidential under section 552.024 of the Government Code. Gov't Code § 552.117(a)(1). Whether information is protected by section 552.117(a)(1) must be determined at the time the request for it is made. *See* Open Records Decision No. 530 at 5 (1989). Thus, information may only be withheld under section 552.117(a)(1) on behalf of a current or former employee who made a request for confidentiality under section 552.024 prior to the date of the governmental body's receipt of the request for the information. Information may not be withheld under section 552.117(a)(1) on behalf of a current or former employee who did not timely request under section 552.024 that the information be kept confidential. Therefore, if the former employee to whom the information pertains timely requested confidentiality under section 552.024, then the city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.117(a)(1). If the former employee did not timely elect to withhold his personal information, then the city may not withhold the marked information under section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We understand you have redacted an e-mail address pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009), a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold ten categories of information, including e-mail addresses of members of the public under section 552.137 of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision. Section 552.137 of the Government Code provides "an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body is confidential and not subject to disclosure under [the Act]," unless the owner of the e-mail address has affirmatively consented to its public disclosure. Gov't Code § 552.137(a)-(b). The types of e-mail addresses listed in section 552.137(c) may not be withheld under this exception. *See id.* § 552.137(c). We have marked additional e-mail addresses that are not of the type specifically excluded by

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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).

section 552.137(c). Accordingly, the city must withhold the e-mail address you have redacted, in addition to the e-mail addresses we have marked, under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owners affirmatively consent to their release.

In summary, the city must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. If the former employee at issue timely requested confidentiality under section 552.024, then the city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.117(a)(1) of the Government Code. The city must withhold the e-mail address you have redacted, in addition to the e-mail addresses we have marked, under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owners affirmatively consent to their release. The remaining information must be released.

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

Sincerely,



Nneka Kanu  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

NK/em

Ref: ID# 400625

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)