



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 6, 2011

Mr. B. Chase Griffith
Brown & Hofmeister, L.L.P.
740 East Campbell Road, Suite 800
Richardson, Texas 75081

OR2011-04736

Dear Mr. Griffith:

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# 414649.

The Town of Flower Mound (the "town") received a request for information related to a specified accident. You claim the requested information is 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.

Initially, we note the submitted information includes a CR-3 report completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). Section 550.065(b) states, except as provided by subsection (c) or subsection (e), accident reports are privileged and confidential. *Id.* § 550.065(b). However, section 550.065(c)(4) provides for 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.¹ In this instance, the requestor has provided the town with all three specified pieces of information pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4). We note you seek to withhold this information under section 552.101

¹*See* Transp. Code § 550.0601 ("department" means Texas Department of Transportation).

of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy and section 552.108 of the Government Code. However, because the requestor in this instance has a statutory right of access to the information at issue, the town may not withhold any of this information from the requestor on those bases. *Collins v. Tex Mall, L.P.*, 297 S.W.3d 409, 415 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2009, no pet.) (statutory provision controls and preempts common law only when statute directly conflicts with common law principle); *CenterPoint Energy Houston Elec. LLC v. Harris County Toll Rd.*, 436 F.3d 541, 544 (5th Cir. 2006) (common law controls only where there is no conflicting or controlling statutory law); see Open Records Decision Nos. 525 (1989) (statutory predecessor), 451 at 4 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exceptions to disclosure under the Act). Accordingly, the submitted CR-3 report, which we have marked, must be released in its entirety pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code.

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. See Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. See *id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested). You state the remaining information relates to a closed case that ended in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. Based on your representation and our review, we agree section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to the remaining information.

However, 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). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e.*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). See Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the town may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.²

In summary, the marked CR-3 report must be released in its entirety pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of the basic information, the town may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code. The basic information must be released.

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

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 Wilcox
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TW/tf

Ref: ID# 414649

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)