



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 31, 2011

Mr. Robert Almonte
Assistant City Attorney
City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza 9th Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901-1196

OR2011-07667

Dear Mr. Almonte:

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# 423577.

The El Paso Police Department (the "department") received a request for information relating to a specified arrest. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the information you submitted.

We note the submitted information includes the results of an analysis of a breath specimen. Section 724.018 of the Transportation Code provides that upon the request of the person who has given a specimen at the request of a peace officer, full information concerning the analysis of the specimen must be made available to that person or the person's attorney. Although you seek to withhold the results of the analysis of the breath specimen under section 552.108 of the Government Code, as a general rule the exceptions to disclosure found in the Act do not apply to information other statutes make public. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 623 at 3 (1994), 525 at 3 (1989). In this instance, the requestor is the person who gave the breath specimen at the request of a peace officer. Therefore, the department must release the submitted results of the analysis of the breath specimen to this requestor pursuant to section 724.018 of the Transportation Code.

Next, we address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code for the rest of the submitted information. Section 552.108(a)(1) 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 must reasonably explain how and why section 552.108 is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You inform us, and have provided a letter from an assistant district attorney for the 34th Judicial District stating, release of the remaining information would interfere with a pending criminal case. Based on your representations and the assistant district attorney’s letter, we conclude section 552.108(a)(1) is generally 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) (court delineates law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

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. The department must release basic offense and arrest information, including a detailed description of the offense, even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). The department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department (1) must release the results of the analysis of the breath specimen pursuant to section 724.018 of the Transportation Code and (2) may withhold the rest of the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code, except for the basic information that must be released under section 552.108(c).¹

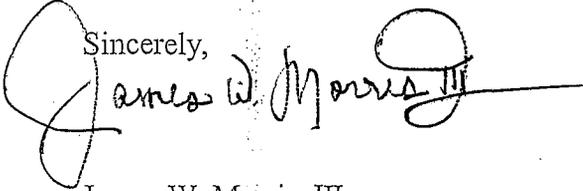
This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

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

¹We note basic information includes the arrested person’s social security number. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code 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. The requestor has a right, however, to his own social security number. *See generally* Gov’t Code § 552.023(b) (governmental body may not deny access to person to whom information relates, or that person’s representative, solely on grounds that information is considered confidential by privacy principles).

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James W. Morris III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

James W. Morris, III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JWM/em

Ref: ID# 423577

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)