



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 10, 2011

Ms. Leticia Mendiola
Crime Records Office
City of McAllen Police Department
P.O. Box 220
McAllen, Texas 78501

OR2011-16653

Dear Ms. Mendiola:

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# 440440.

The McAllen Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified accident. You claim that 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 submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information includes a CR-3 accident report form completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). Section 550.065(b) provides, except as provided by subsection (c) or subsection (e), accident reports are privileged and confidential.¹ *Id.* § 550.065(b). Section (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.*

¹Section 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 information protected by other statutes. This office will raise section 552.101 on behalf of a governmental body, as this section is a mandatory exception to disclosure. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.007, .352; Open Records Decision No. 674 at 3 n.4 (2001) (mandatory exceptions).

§ 550.065(c)(4). Under this provision, a governmental entity is required to release a copy of an accident report to a person who provides it with two or more of the items of information specified by the statute. *Id.* In this instance, the requestor has not provided the city with the required pieces of information. Accordingly, the department must withhold the submitted CR-3 accident report form under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code.

Next, we address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code for the remaining information. Section 552.108 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). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the remaining information is related to a pending criminal case. Based upon your representation, we find that the release of the remaining information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *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 that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

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*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-7, Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic front page offense and arrest information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

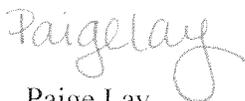
In summary, the department must withhold the submitted CR-3 accident report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold the remaining information 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 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 that reads "Paigelay".

Paige Lay
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PL/ag

Ref: ID# 440440

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)