



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

March 12, 2012

Ms. Sharon Alexander
Associate General Counsel
Texas Department of Transportation
125 East 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

OR2012-03708

Dear Ms. Alexander:

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# 451728.

The Texas Department of Transportation (the "department") received a request for documents pertaining to a named individual's application for job vacancy number 016575. You state the department is releasing most of the requested information. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under section 552.122 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.122 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "a test item developed by a . . . governmental body[.]" Gov't Code § 552.122(b). In Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994), this office determined that the term "test item" in section 552.122 includes "any standard means by which an individual's or group's knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated," but does not encompass evaluations of an employee's overall job performance or suitability. *Id.* at 6. The question of whether specific information falls within the scope of section 552.122(b) must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *Id.* Traditionally, this office has applied section 552.122 where release of "test items" might compromise the effectiveness of future examinations. *Id.* at 4-5; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 118 (1976). Section 552.122 also protects the answers to test questions when

the answers might reveal the questions themselves. *See* Attorney General Opinion JM-640 at 3 (1987); Open Records Decision No. 626 at 8 (1994).

You contend the interview question and response you have marked are excepted from disclosure under section 552.122(b) of the Government Code. You argue the release of this information might undermine the selection process and compromise the effectiveness of future examinations. Based on your representations and our review, we find the interview question you have marked qualifies as a test item under section 552.122(b). We also find that release of the actual answer to this question would tend to reveal the question itself. Therefore, the department may withhold the question at issue, along with the actual answer, pursuant to section 552.122(b). As you raise no further arguments against disclosure, 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, 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,



Ana Carolina Vieira
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ACV/akg

Ref: ID# 451728

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)