



**ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS**  
**GREG ABBOTT**

July 23, 2012

Mr. Charles H. Weir  
Assistant City Attorney  
Office of the City Attorney  
City of San Antonio  
P.O. Box 839966  
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

OR2012-11338

Dear Mr. Weir:

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# 460497 (COSA File No. W007488).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received a request for a specified report number.<sup>1</sup> You claim that the submitted 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 must address the city's obligations under the Act. Section 552.301 of the Government Code describes the procedural obligations placed on a governmental body that receives a written request for information it wishes to withhold. Pursuant to section 552.301(e) of the Government Code, a governmental body is required to submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving the request (1) general written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled

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<sup>1</sup>Because you have not submitted a copy of the request for information, we take our description from your brief.

to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e). You inform us the city received the present request on May 10, 2012. We understand the city was closed on May 28, 2012 for the Memorial Day holiday. Thus, the city's fifteen-business-day deadline was June 1, 2012. However, as of the date of this letter, the city has not submitted a copy of the written request for information. Consequently, we find the city failed to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption the requested information is public and must be released unless a compelling reason exists to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Section 552.108 of the Government Code is a discretionary exception to disclosure that is waived by the governmental body's failure to comply with section 552.301. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 663 at 5 (1999) (waiver of discretionary exceptions), 177 at 3 (1977) (statutory predecessor to Gov't Code § 552.108 subject to waiver). Accordingly, the submitted information may not be withheld under section 552.108. However, because sections 552.101 and 552.130 of the Government Code can provide compelling reasons to withhold information, we will consider the applicability of these exceptions to the submitted information.<sup>2</sup>

Next, we note the submitted information contains CR-3 accident report forms. 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 information protected by other statutes, such as section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. Section 550.065(b) states that except as provided by subsection (c) or subsection (e), accident reports are privileged and confidential. *See* Transp. Code § 550.065. Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the 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). Because you have not submitted the request for information, we cannot determine whether the requestor has provided the city with at least two of the three listed pieces of information and must rule conditionally. If the requestor

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<sup>2</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise mandatory exceptions on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

has provided the city with at least two of the three listed pieces of information, the city must release unredacted copies of the CR-3 accident report forms to him pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4). *See* Open Records Decision No. 623 at 3 (1994) (exceptions in Act inapplicable to information that statutes expressly make public), 613 at 4 (1993) (exceptions in Act cannot impinge on statutory right of access to information), 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exception to disclosure under the Act). If, however, the requestor has not provided the required information, the city must withhold these reports pursuant to section 552.101 in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses chapter 411 of the Government Code, which pertains to criminal history record information (“CHRI”) generated by the National Crime Information Center or by the Texas Crime Information Center. *See* Gov’t Code § 411.083(a). Title 28, part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations governs the release of CHRI states obtain from the federal government or other states. Open Records Decision No. 565 (1990). The federal regulations allow each state to follow its individual laws with respect to the CHRI it generates. *See id.* Section 411.083 of the Government Code deems confidential CHRI the Texas Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) maintains, except DPS may disseminate this information as provided in chapter 411, subchapter F of the Government Code. *See* Gov’t Code § 411.083. Sections 411.083(b)(1) and 411.089(a) authorize a criminal justice agency to obtain CHRI; however, a criminal justice agency may not release CHRI except to another criminal justice agency for a criminal justice purpose. *Id.* § 411.089(b)(1). Other entities specified in chapter 411 of the Government Code are entitled to obtain CHRI from DPS or another criminal justice agency; however, those entities may not release CHRI except as provided by chapter 411. *See generally id.* §§ 411.090-.127. Similarly, any CHRI obtained from DPS or any other criminal justice agency must be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with chapter 411, subchapter F of the Government Code. Upon review, we find the information we have marked constitutes CHRI. Thus, the city must withhold the marked information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with federal law and chapter 411 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses chapter 560 of the Government Code, which provides that a governmental body may not release biometric identifier information except in certain limited circumstances. *See id.* §§ 560.001 (defining “biometric identifier” to include fingerprints and records of hand geometry), .002 (prescribing manner in which biometric identifiers must be maintained and circumstances in which they can be released), .003 (providing that biometric identifiers in possession of governmental body are exempt from disclosure under the Act). You do not inform us, and the submitted information does not indicate, that section 560.002 permits the disclosure of the submitted fingerprint information. Therefore, the city must withhold the fingerprint information we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 560.003 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). The type of information considered intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included 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. A compilation of an individual's criminal history is highly embarrassing information, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person. *Cf. U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 764 (1989) (when considering prong regarding individual's privacy interest, court recognized distinction between public records found in courthouse files and local police stations and compiled summary of information and noted that individual has significant privacy interest in compilation of one's own criminal history). Moreover, we find a compilation of a private citizen's criminal history is generally not of legitimate concern to the public. Upon review, we find the information we have marked is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Therefore, the city must withhold the information we have marked pursuant to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title, or registration issued by an agency of this state or another state or country. Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1)-(2). Upon review, we find the city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130.

In summary, unless the requestor has complied with the release provision of section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code, the city must withhold the CR-3 accident report forms under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. The city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with (1) federal law and chapter 411 of the Government Code, (2) section 560.003 of the Government Code, and (3) common-law privacy. The city must also withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>We note the remaining information contains a 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. Gov't Code § 552.147(b).

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,



Sarah Casterline  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

SEC/bs

Ref: ID# 460497

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)