



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 13, 2013

Ms. Evelyn W. Njuguna
Staff Attorney
City of Houston
1200 Travis
Houston, Texas 77002-6000

OR2013-07880

Dear Ms. Njuguna:

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# 487201 (ORU No. 13-1086).

The Houston Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to any overtime patrol programs in the South Central Beat, including any correspondences of the chief of police's office. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 through 552.153 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

We must address the department's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body is required to submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records 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 to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. Gov't Code § 552.301(e). The request reflects the department received the request on February 20, 2013. Accordingly, the department's fifteen-business-day deadline was March 13, 2013. However, as of the date of this letter, you have not submitted arguments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply or a copy or representative sample of the responsive information.

Therefore, we find the department failed to comply with the requirements of section 552.301(e).

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless the governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason 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, 381-81 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). A compelling reason exists when third-party interests are at stake or when information is confidential under other law. Open Records Decision No. 150 (1977). Because the department failed to comply with the requirements of the Act, the department has waived all of its claimed discretionary exceptions to disclosure. *See* Open Records Decision No. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (untimely request for decision results in waiver of discretionary exceptions). Although the department also raises mandatory exceptions to disclosure, because you have not submitted the requested information for our review, we have no basis for finding any of the requested information excepted from disclosure or confidential by law. Thus, we have no choice but to order you to release the requested information in accordance with section 552.302 of the Government Code. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 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, appearing to read "Kathleen J. Santos". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Kathleen J. Santos
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KJS/som

Ref: ID# 487201

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)