



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 15, 2014

Ms. Danielle R. Folsom
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2014-00908

Dear Ms. Folsom:

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# 511804 (GC No. 20957).

The Houston Fire Department (the "department") received a request for statements submitted in connection with a specified department investigation. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.107 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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 section 143.1214 of the Local Government Code. You state the City of Houston is a civil service city under chapter 143 of the Local Government Code. Section 143.1214 provides in relevant part:

(b) The department shall maintain an investigatory file that relates to a disciplinary action against a fire fighter or police officer that was overturned on appeal, or any document in the possession of the department that relates to a charge of misconduct against a fire fighter or police officer, regardless of whether the charge is sustained, only in a file created by the department for the department's use. The department may only release information in those investigatory files or documents relating to a charge of misconduct:

- (1) to another law enforcement agency or fire department;
- (2) to the office of a district or United States attorney; or
- (3) in accordance with Subsection (c).

(c) The department head or the department head's designee may forward a document that relates to disciplinary action against a fire fighter or police officer to the director or the director's designee for inclusion in the fire fighter's or police officer's personnel file maintained under Sections 143.089(a)-(f) only if:

- (1) disciplinary action was actually taken against the fire fighter or police officer;
- (2) the document shows the disciplinary action taken; and
- (3) the document includes at least a brief summary of the facts on which the disciplinary action was based.

Local Gov't Code § 143.1214(b)-(c). You inform us the responsive information relates to an internal affairs division investigation of alleged violations of department rules and regulations by a department firefighter. You state because the investigation is pending, the allegations have not been sustained and no disciplinary action has been taken. You further state the requestor does not represent another law enforcement agency or fire department or a district or United States attorney's office. You assert the information at issue does not meet the requirements of section 143.1214(c) for inclusion in the firefighter's civil service personnel file. *See id.* § 143.1214(c); *see also id.* § 143.089(a)-(g). Thus, based on your representations and our review, we conclude the submitted information must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 143.1214 of the Local Government Code.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 responsibilities, please visit our website at <http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/>

¹As our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining claim.

[url_ruling_info.shtml](#), 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 511804

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)