



OFFICE of the ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

March 24, 2003

Mr. Steven D. Monté
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
2014 Main, Room 501
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2003-1976

Dear Mr. Monté:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 178278.

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified videotape. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure pursuant to sections 552.108 and 552.119 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and have reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a) provides in pertinent part that information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from disclosure if "release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Section 552.108(b) provides in pertinent part that an internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted from disclosure if the release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution. *See* Gov't Code § 552.108(b)(1). Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 as an exception to disclosure of requested information must demonstrate, if the information does not supply the explanation on its face, how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(a), (b), .301(e)(1)(a); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). This office has determined that procedural information related to law enforcement may, under some circumstances, be withheld under section 552.108 or its statutory predecessors. *See, e.g.,* Open Records Decision Nos. 531 (1989) (detailed use of force guidelines), 456 (1987) (forms indicating location of off-duty

police officers), 413 (1984) (security measures to be used at next execution), 341 (1982) (Department of Public Safety drivers' licenses forgery detection procedures), 143 (1976) (specific operations or specialized equipment directly related to investigation or detection of crime).

You state that the release of the submitted videotapes that concern the use of pressure points, particularly with regard to palm "heal" strikes, counter measures, and the force continuum would reveal tactics involved in restraining and apprehending suspects. You also state that the release of the videotapes would provide individuals with a distinct advantage in efforts to avoid apprehension by law enforcement and would involve an added risk of physical harm to police officers. Thus, you contend that the release of the videotapes would interfere with law enforcement. Based on our review of your arguments and the submitted videotapes, we agree and, thus, conclude that the department may withhold the videotapes in their entirety pursuant to section 552.108 of the Government Code. Because we base our ruling on section 552.108, we need not address your remaining claimed exception to disclosure.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

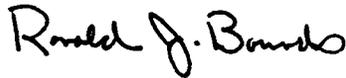
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Ronald J. Bounds
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RJB/lmt

Ref: ID# 178278

Enc. Submitted videotape

c: Mr. Richard Todd
Dallas Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 588
1414 N. Washington
Dallas, Texas 75204
(w/o enclosure)