



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

November 30, 2006

Mr. James M. Frazier, III  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
P.O. Box 4004  
Huntsville, Texas 77342-4004

OR2006-14052

Dear Mr. Frazier:

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# 265735.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for the following information: (1) with respect to any complaints filed against department officers from a specified unit since August 1, 2006: the names of complainants, the names of officers who are subjects of complaints, officers' written responses to complaints, the final disposition or current status of complaints, and the dates associated with these records; (2) any records of the Office of the Inspector General (the "OIG") pertaining to a named individual who was arrested in Cherokee County on August 3, 2006; and (3) any records of the OIG pertaining to disciplinary action complaints against three named department officers. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.134 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.134(a) of the Government Code relates to inmates of the department and provides in relevant part the following:

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) or by Section 552.029 [of the Government Code], information obtained or maintained by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the department.

Gov't Code § 552.134(a). Section 552.134 is explicitly made subject to section 552.029, which provides in relevant part the following:

Notwithstanding . . . Section 552.134, the following information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice is subject to required disclosure under Section 552.021:

...

(8) basic information regarding the death of an inmate in custody, an incident involving the use of force, or an alleged crime involving the inmate.

*Id.* § 552.029(8). You state that the submitted information is about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by the department. However, some of these records concern an alleged crime involving an inmate. Thus, the department must release basic information concerning this crime. *Id.* Basic information includes the time and place of the incident, names of inmates and department officials directly involved, a brief narrative of the incident, a brief description of any injuries sustained, and information regarding criminal charges or disciplinary actions filed as a result of the incident. The department must withhold the remaining submitted information pursuant to section 552.134 of the Government Code.

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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, 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 Office of the Attorney General 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. 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,



Jaime L. Flores  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JLF/eb

Ref: ID# 265735

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Mark Collette  
410 West Erwin Street  
Tyler, Texas 75702  
(w/o enclosures)