



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

April 28, 2009

Ms. Yvette Aguilar  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Corpus Christi  
P.O. Box 9277  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78469-9277

OR2009-05597

Dear Ms. Aguilar:

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# 341198.

The Corpus Christi Police Department (the "department") received a request for the incident report, audio and video recordings, and mug shot for a specified incident. You state the department does not have any video related to this incident.<sup>1</sup> You also state you will release some of the requested information. You claim portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we must address the department's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures that a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether information is excepted from public disclosure. Pursuant to section 552.301(b) of the Government Code, a governmental body must ask for the attorney general's decision and state the exceptions that apply within ten business days after receiving the request. *See Gov't Code* § 552.301(a), (b). The department received the

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when a request for information was received or to prepare new information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266, 267-68 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

present request on February 3, 2009. Accordingly, the department was required to request its decision from this office by February 17, 2009. However, the envelope in which the department's request for a ruling was submitted bears a postmark date of February 18, 2009. *See id.* § 552.308(a) (prescribing standards for timeliness of action by United States or interagency mail or common or contract carrier). Although you assert the United States Postal Service was closed on February 16, 2009, you do not inform us the City of Corpus Christi was closed for any of its usual business days between February 3, 2009 and February 17, 2009. Consequently, we find the department failed to comply with the 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 that the information is public. Information that is presumed public must be released unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information to overcome this presumption. *See 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); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). A compelling reason exists when third-party interests are at stake, or when information is confidential by law. Open Records Decision No. 150 (1977). Section 552.108 is a discretionary exception to disclosure that protects a governmental body's interests and generally is not a compelling reason to withhold information. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions), 177 (1977) (statutory predecessor to section 552.108 subject to waiver). *But see* Open Records Decision No. 586 at 2-3 (1991) (claim of another governmental body under statutory predecessor to section 552.108 can provide compelling reason for non-disclosure). In failing to comply with section 552.301, the department has waived its claim under section 552.108. However, because your claim under section 552.130 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason for non-disclosure, we will address this exception.

Section 552.130 provides that information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title, or registration issued by a Texas agency is excepted from public release. Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1), (2). Therefore, the department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle information you have marked, as well as the additional information we have marked, and the Texas license plate numbers contained in the submitted audio recording under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the marked Texas motor vehicle information and the Texas license plate numbers contained in the submitted audio recording under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.

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 at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Melanie J. Villars  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MJV/eeg

Ref: ID# 341198

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)