



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

May 13, 2009

Mr. Gregory A. Alicie
Open Records Specialist
Baytown Police Department
3200 North Main Street
Baytown, Texas 77521

OR2009-06479

Dear Mr. Alicie:

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# 343029 (Baytown reference no. 2009-8600).

The Baytown Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.147 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." This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. Section 261.201(a) of the Family Code provides as follows:

The following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

- (1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and
- (2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). The submitted information consists of files, reports, records, communications, or working papers used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261; therefore, this information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201 as “person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes”), 261.001(1)(E) (definition of child abuse includes sexual assault under Penal Code section 22.011). You do not indicate that the department has adopted a rule governing the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume that no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude that the submitted information is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code, and the department must withhold it in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).²

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 at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Bob Davis
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

RSD/cc

¹Because we are able to resolve this under section 261.201, we do not address your other arguments for exception of the submitted information.

²We note the requestor, as a parent of the child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect, may have a right of access to certain abuse and neglect records maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”). Section 261.201(g) of the Family Code provides that DFPS, upon request and subject to its own rules, “shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section if [DFPS] has edited the information to protect the confidentiality of the identity of the person who made the report and any other person whose life or safety may be endangered by the disclosure.” Fam. Code § 261.201(g).

Ref: ID# 343029

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)