



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

GREG ABBOTT

June 26, 2009

Mr. Charles H. Weir
Assistant City Attorney
City of San Antonio
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

OR2009-08833

Dear Mr. Weir:

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# 347209 (ORR 2009-3142).

The San Antonio Police Department (the "department") received two requests from the same requestor for information related to a specified accident. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note that the submitted information contains CR-3 accident report forms that were completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). Section 550.065(b) states that except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential. *Id.* § 550.064(b). Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). Under this provision, the Texas Department of Transportation or another governmental entity is required to release a copy of an accident report to a person who provides the agency with two or more pieces of information specified by the statute.¹ *Id.* In this case, the requestor has provided the information specified by the statute. Accordingly, the CR-3 accident report

¹Transp. Code § 550.0601 ("department" means Texas Department of Transportation).

forms in the submitted information must be released to the requestor pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4).

You seek to withhold the remaining information under section 552.108 of the Government Code, which excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body must reasonably explain how and why section 552.108 is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the information at issue relates to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representation, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is generally applicable to the remaining information. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases).

We note, however, that the information at issue contains two copies of a “Statutory Warning” and two copies of a “Notice of Suspension.” The department provided copies of these forms to the cited individual. You have not explained how releasing this information, which has already been seen by the defendant, would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). Accordingly, the statutory warnings and notices of suspension may not be withheld under section 552.108.

We further note that section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” *Id.* § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic front-page information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88. The department must release basic information even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). With the exception of the statutory warnings, notices of suspension, and basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We note that the statutory warnings and notices of suspension contain Texas motor vehicle record information subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.² This section excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle operator’s or driver’s license or permit or a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state. *See*

²The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception like section 552.130 on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

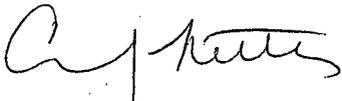
Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1), (2). Thus, the department must withhold the Texas driver's license numbers that we have marked pursuant to section 552.130.

In summary, the submitted CR-3 report forms must be released pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of basic information, the statutory warnings, and the notices of suspension, the department may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing the notices of suspension, statutory warnings, and basic information, the department must withhold the marked information subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.

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,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 347209

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)