



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 25, 2009

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

OR2009-11985

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# 353433.

The Baytown Police Department (the "department") received a request for a specified offense report. You state that social security numbers will be redacted from responsive records pursuant to section 552.147 of the Government Code.¹ You claim that portions of the submitted information are excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.136 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the information you submitted.

First, you to claim that the information you have marked in yellow is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. Common-law privacy protects information if (1) the information contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) the

¹We note that section 552.147(b) authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act.

information is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). The type of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. 540 S.W.2d at 683. This office has also found that some kinds of medical information or information indicating disabilities or specific illnesses are excepted from disclosure under common-law privacy. See Open Records Decision Nos. 343 (1982) (references in emergency medical records to drug overdoses, acute alcohol intoxication, obstetrical or gynecological illnesses, convulsions or seizures, and emotional or mental distress), 455 (1987) (prescription drugs, illnesses, operations, and physical handicaps), 470 (1987) (illness from severe emotional and job-related stress). Upon review, we find that the information you have marked in yellow is intimate or embarrassing and of no legitimate public concern; therefore, the department must withhold this information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Next, section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code 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 that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. See *id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the submitted information relates to a pending investigation. Based on your representation and our review of the submitted information, we conclude that the release of the information you have marked in orange would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. 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). Therefore, the department may withhold the information you have marked in orange under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.²

In summary, the department must withhold the information you have marked in yellow under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. In addition, the department may withhold the information you have marked in orange under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

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,



Tamara Wilcox
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TW/dls

Ref: ID# 353433

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)