



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

October 20, 2009

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

OR2009-14810

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# 363452 (COSA File No. 2009-4354).

The San Antonio Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to offense report 90243069. You claim 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 documents include a CR-3 accident report form completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064. Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision."¹ Gov't Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, including section 550.065 of the Transportation Code. Section 550.065(b) states that except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential. *See* Transp.

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception like section 552.101 on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

Code § 550.065(b). Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of the accident report to a person who provides two or more of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) specific location of the accident; and (3) name of any person involved in the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). In this instance, the requestor has not provided two of the three items of information specified by section 550.065(c)(4). Therefore, the department must withhold the submitted accident report pursuant to section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code.

We now address your argument under section 552.108 of the Government Code for the remaining submitted information. Section 552.108 of the Government Code excepts from public 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.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the information at issue pertains to an ongoing criminal case. Based on your representations and our review, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable in this instance. *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).

Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov’t Code § 552.108 (c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-87; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of the basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must withhold the submitted accident report pursuant to section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information from public disclosure under section 552.108(a)(1) 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, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amy Shipp".

Amy L.S. Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ALS/rl

Ref: ID# 363452

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)