



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 16, 2010

Lieutenant William T. Edmundson
Record Division
Pharr Police Department
1900 South Cage
Pharr, Texas 78577-6751

OR2010-05433

Dear Lt. Edmundson:

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# 381344.

The Pharr Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified accident. You claim that the submitted 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.

The records contain fingerprints whose public availability is governed by sections 560.001, 560.002, and 560.003 of the Government Code. Section 560.003 of the Government Code provides that "[a] biometric identifier in the possession of a governmental body is exempt from disclosure under [the Act]." Gov't Code § 560.003; *see id.* § 560.001(1) ("biometric identifier" means retina or iris scan, fingerprint, voiceprint, or record of hand or face geometry). Section 560.002 of the Government Code provides, however, that "[a] governmental body that possesses a biometric identifier of an individual . . . may not sell, lease, or otherwise disclose the biometric identifier to another person unless . . . the individual consents to the disclosure[.]" *Id.* § 560.002(1)(A). Thus, as an attorney for the deceased individual's estate, the requestor has a right of access to the individual's fingerprints under section 560.002(1)(A). *See* Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual requests information concerning himself). Therefore, the department must release the fingerprints to this requestor pursuant to section 560.002 of the Government Code.

Section 552.108(a)(2) excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . it is information that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication[.]” Gov’t Code §552.108(a)(2). You state that the submitted information relates to criminal investigations that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Based on your representation and our review of the information at issue, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to the remaining submitted information.

We note that basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.108. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Such 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). With the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must release the submitted fingerprints to this requestor pursuant to section 560.002 of the Government Code. With the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(2) 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,



Tamara H. Holland
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

THH/jb

Ref: ID# 381344

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)