



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

December 1, 2011

Ms. Tiffany N. Evans
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2011-17703

Dear Ms. Evans:

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# 437597 (G.C. 18966).

The Houston Police Department (the "department") received a request for calls for service information involving a specified street address, telephone number, named individual and time period. You state some of the requested information either has been or will be released. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the information you submitted. We also have considered the comments we received from the requestor. *See Gov't Code* § 552.304 (any person may submit written comments stating why information at issue in request for attorney general decision should or should not be released).

We note the department did not comply with its deadlines under section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting this decision. Section 552.301 prescribes procedures a

¹You state the department has no other responsive information. We note the Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when it received a request or create responsive information. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 555 at 1 (1990), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

governmental body must follow in asking this office to determine whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. *See id.* § 552.301(a). Section 552.301(b) requires the governmental body to ask for the attorney general's decision and claim its exceptions to disclosure not later than the tenth business day after the date of its receipt of the written request for information. *See id.* § 552.301(b). Section 552.301(e) requires the governmental body to submit to this office, not later than the fifteenth business day after the date of its receipt of the request, (1) written comments stating why the governmental body's claimed exceptions apply to the information at issue; (2) a copy of the request for information; (3) a signed statement of the date of the governmental body's receipt of the request or evidence sufficient to establish the date of receipt; and (4) the specific information at issue or representative samples if the information is voluminous. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A)-(D). Section 552.302 of the Government Code provides that if a governmental body fails to comply with section 552.301, the requested information is presumed to be subject to required public disclosure and must be released, unless there is a compelling reason to withhold any of the information. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ).

You inform us the department received the instant request for information on July 14, 2011; therefore, the department's deadlines under subsections 552.301(b) and 552.301(e) were July 28 and August 4, respectively. You requested this decision by United States mail meter-marked September 23. *See* Gov't Code § 552.308 (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail, common or contract carrier, or interagency mail). Thus, the department did not comply with section 552.301, and the submitted information is therefore presumed to be public under section 552.302. This statutory presumption can generally be overcome when information is confidential by law or third-party interests are at stake. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 630 at 3 (1994), 325 at 2 (1982). Because a claim under section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason for non-disclosure under section 552.302, we will consider your assertion of that exception.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. You claim section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy, which protects information that is highly intimate or embarrassing, such that its release would be highly objectionable to a person of ordinary sensibilities, and of no legitimate public interest. *See Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common law privacy, both elements of the test must be established. *Id.* at 681-82. Common-law privacy encompasses the specific types of information held to be intimate or embarrassing in *Industrial Foundation*. *See id.* at 683 (information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs). This office has determined other types of information also are

private under section 552.101. *See generally* Open Records Decision No. 659 at 4-5 (1999) (summarizing information attorney general has held to be private).

You have marked the information you contend is private. Having reviewed the submitted information, we note it does not identify, nor have you identified, any individual to whom the marked information might pertain. In the absence of any evidence of a connection with an identified or identifiable individual, we conclude the marked information is not highly intimate or embarrassing and a matter of no legitimate public concern. We therefore conclude the department may not withhold any of the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. As you claim no other exception to disclosure, the submitted information must be released.

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,



Paige Lay
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PL/ag

Ref: ID# 437597

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)