



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

November 5, 2013

Ms. Dylbia L. Jefferies Vega  
Civil Legal Division  
Cameron County Commissioners Court  
1100 East Monroe Street  
Brownsville, Texas 78520

OR2013-19305

Dear Ms. Jefferies Vega:

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# 504826.

The Cameron County Sheriff's Department (the "sheriff's department") received a request for a copy of the vehicle pursuit policies from the sheriff's department's training manual. You claim 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.

Section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[a]n internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution . . . if . . . release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(b)(1). Section 552.108(b)(1) is intended to protect "information which, if released, would permit private citizens to anticipate weaknesses in a police department, avoid detection, jeopardize officer safety, and generally undermine police efforts to effectuate the laws of this State." *City of Fort Worth v. Cornyn*, 86 S.W.3d 320, 327 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.). To demonstrate the applicability of this exception, a governmental body must meet its burden of explaining how and why release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention. Open Records Decision No. 562 at 10 (1990) (construing statutory predecessor). This office has concluded section 552.108(b) excepts from public disclosure information relating to the security or operation of a law enforcement agency. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 531 (1989) (release of detailed use of force guidelines would unduly interfere with law

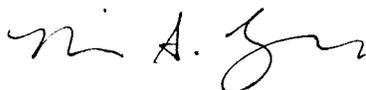
enforcement), 252 (1980) (section 552.108 designed to protect investigative techniques and procedures used in law enforcement), 143 (1976) (disclosure of specific operations or specialized equipment directly related to investigation or detection of crime may be excepted). Section 552.108(b)(1) is not applicable, however, to generally known policies and procedures. *See, e.g.*, ORDs 531 at 2-3 (Penal Code provisions, common law rules, and constitutional limitations on use of force not protected), 252 at 3 (governmental body failed to indicate why investigative procedures and techniques requested were any different from those commonly known). The determination of whether the release of particular records would interfere with law enforcement is made on a case-by-case basis. Open Records Decision No. 409 at 2 (1984).

You state release of the submitted information would alert the public to when and how sheriff's department officers pursue individuals in emergency situations. You further state the submitted information could be used against sheriff's department officers in the field and thus place them in danger. Thus, you contend release of the submitted information would interfere with the detection, investigation, and prosecution of crime. Based on your representations and our review, we have marked information the sheriff's department may withhold under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. However, we find you have not demonstrated release of any of the remaining information would interfere with law enforcement or crime prevention. We, therefore, conclude the sheriff's department may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. As you raise no further exceptions to disclosure, the sheriff's department must release the remaining 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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Nicholas A. Ybarra  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

NAY/ac

Ref: ID# 504826

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)