



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

February 10, 2014

Ms. Molly Cost  
Assistant General Counsel  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2014-02492

Dear Ms. Cost:

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# 513864 (DPS PIR # 13-4556).

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for certain information pertaining to three state troopers; information used by state troopers or used to train state troopers regarding the investigation and/or reporting of accidents; information pertaining to maintenance of a specified location for a specified time period; and any photographs or video recordings of the specified location for a specified time period. You state the department does not possess some of the requested information.<sup>1</sup> You also state the department will make some of the requested information available to the requestor and will withhold some of the requested information pursuant to the previous determination issued to the department in Open Records Letter No. 2010-12863 (2010).<sup>2</sup> You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when it received a request, create responsive information, or obtain information that is not held by the governmental body or on its behalf. *See Economic 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).

<sup>2</sup>Open Records Letter No. 2010-12863 serves as a previous determination authorizing the department to withhold certain personnel records of commissioned officers of the department under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 411.00755 of the Government Code. *See Gov't Code* § 411.00755(b)(1)-(12), (c); *see also id.* § 552.301(a); Open Records Decision No. 673 at 7-8 (2001).

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. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes, such as the Medical Practice Act (the "MPA"), subtitle B of title 3 of the Occupations Code, which provides in pertinent part:

(b) A record of the identity, diagnosis, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by a physician that is created or maintained by a physician is confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

(c) A person who receives information from a confidential communication or record as described by this chapter, other than a person listed in Section 159.004 who is acting on the patient's behalf, may not disclose the information except to the extent that disclosure is consistent with the authorized purposes for which the information was first obtained.

Occ. Code § 159.002(b)-(c). Information that is subject to the MPA includes both medical records and information obtained from those medical records. *See id.* §§ 159.002, .004. Upon review, we find the information we have marked constitutes a medical record. As such, the department must withhold the marked medical record under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the MPA.<sup>3</sup>

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person and (2) not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. Additionally, this office has concluded some kinds of medical information are generally highly intimate or embarrassing. *See* Open Records Decision No. 455 (1987). However, this office has noted the public has a legitimate interest in information that relates to public employees and their conduct in the workplace. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 562 at 10 (1990) (personnel file information does not involve most intimate aspects of human affairs but in fact touches on matters of legitimate public concern), 470 at 4 (1987) (job performance does not generally constitute public employee's private affairs), 444 at 3 (1986) (public has obvious interest in information concerning qualifications and performance of government employees), 405 at 2 (1983) (manner in which public employee's job was performed cannot be said to be of minimal public interest), 329 (1982) (reasons for employee's resignation ordinarily not private).

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<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your argument against disclosure of this information.

Upon review, we find some of the information you have marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. However, we find you have failed to demonstrate the remaining information you have marked is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Therefore, this information may not be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. With the exception of the information we have marked for release, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, the department must withhold the medical record we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the MPA. With the exception of the information we have marked for release, the department must withhold the information you have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The 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,



Lindsay E. Hale  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

LEH/tch

Ref: ID# 513864

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)