ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 10, 2014

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

OR2014-09934

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# 525437 (COSA File No. W025699).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received a request for specified policies or guidelines of the city's fire department; exception reports and responses to those reports; a list of all fields in the dispatch database; specified policies of the City of Fort Worth Fire Department, the dispatching authority, and the fire marshal; specified information regarding worker's compensation claims filed by firefighters for on-duty injuries during a specified time period; after-action reports for a response where a firefighter was injured or killed filed during a specified time period; disciplinary actions related to a response where a firefighter was injured or killed during a specified time period; and the number of City of Fort Worth Fire Department trucks equipped with thermal imaging cameras. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 through 552.154 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

We must address the city's procedural obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code when requesting a decision from this office under the Act. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body must submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e). You state the city received the request for information on March 19, 2014. However, as of the date of this letter, the city has not submitted for our review written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply or a copy or representative sample of the information requested.

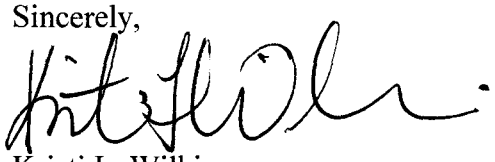
Consequently, we find the city failed to comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with section 552.301 results in the legal presumption the requested information is public and must be released unless a compelling reason exists to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third-party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Because the city has failed to comply with the procedural requirements of the Act, the city has waived all of its claimed discretionary exceptions to disclosure. *See* Open Records Decision No. 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions). Although the city also raises mandatory exceptions to disclosure, because the city has not submitted the requested information for our review, we have no basis for finding any of the information is excepted from disclosure or confidential by law. Thus, we have no choice but to order the city to release the requested information pursuant to section 552.302. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 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.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,



Kristi L. Wilkins
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KLW/tch

Ref: ID# 525437

c: Requestor