



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 19, 2014

Ms. Stefanie Albright
Counsel for City of Sweetwater
Lloyd, Gosselink, Rochelle & Townsend, P.C.
816 Congress Avenue, Suite 1900
Austin, Texas 78701

OR2014-10575

Dear Ms. Albright:

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# 526543.

The Sweetwater Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for the department's general orders. We understand the department will be releasing some of the requested information. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(b) 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 (1) release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(b)(1). This section 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.). This office has

¹Although you also raise sections 552.107 and 552.111 of the Government Code, you have provided no arguments explaining how these exceptions are applicable to the submitted information. Therefore, we assume you no longer assert these exceptions. See Gov't Code §§ 552.301(e)(1)(A), .302.

concluded this provision protects certain kinds of information, the disclosure of which might compromise the security or operations of a law enforcement agency. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 531 at 3-4 (1989) (detailed guidelines regarding police department's use of force policy), 508 at 3-4 (1988) (information relating to future transfers of prisoners), 413 (1984) (sketch showing security measures for forthcoming execution). However, to claim this aspect of section 552.108 protection a governmental body must meet its burden of explaining how and why release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention. Open Records Decision No. 562 at 10 (1990). Further, commonly known policies and techniques may not be withheld under section 552.108. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 531 at 2-3 (former section 552.108 does not protect Penal Code provisions, common-law rules, and constitutional limitations on use of force), 252 at 3 (1980) (governmental body did not meet burden because it did not indicate why investigative procedures and techniques submitted were any different from those commonly known with law enforcement and crime prevention). To prevail on its claim that section 552.108(b)(1) exempts information from disclosure, a law-enforcement agency must do more than merely make a conclusory assertion that releasing the information would interfere with law enforcement. 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 the submitted information consists of the department's policies and procedures governing law enforcement and operational matters. You contend release of the information at issue would unduly interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention by revealing the specific procedures used by department police officers and personnel to prevent and predict crimes. Based on your arguments and our review of the information at issue, we find the release of some of the submitted information would interfere with law enforcement. Therefore, the department may withhold this information, which we have marked, under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. However, we conclude the department has not established the release of the remaining information would interfere with law enforcement. Therefore, the department may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.108(b)(1). As you raise no further exceptions to disclosure, 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, 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Britni Fabian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Britni Fabian
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BF/dls

Ref: ID# 526543

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)