



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

October 30, 2014

Ms. Ashley D. Fourt  
Assistant District Attorney  
Tarrant County  
401 West Belknap  
Fort Worth, Texas 76196-0201

OR2014-19700

Dear Ms. Fourt:

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# 547056.

The Tarrant County Sheriff's Department (the "sheriff's office") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident report. You claim the requested 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. We have also received and considered comments from the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

We note the submitted information includes court-filed documents. Section 552.022(a)(17) of the Government Code provides for required public disclosure of "information that is also contained in a public court record[.]" unless the information is expressly made confidential under the Act or other law. Gov't Code § 552.022(a)(17). Although the sheriff's office seeks to withhold the information at issue under section 552.108 of the Government Code, this section is a discretionary exception to disclosure that protects a governmental body's interests and does not make information confidential under the Act. *See id.* § 552.007; Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 177 at 3 (1977) (statutory predecessor to section 552.108 subject to waiver). Therefore, the sheriff's office may not withhold the court-filed documents, which we have marked, under section 552.108. However, because section 552.130 of the Government Code makes

information confidential for purposes of section 552.022, we will address its applicability to the court-filed documents subject to section 552.022(a)(17).<sup>1</sup> Further, we will address the sheriff's office's argument against disclosure of the remaining information.

Section 552.108(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must reasonably explain how and why the release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706, 710 (Tex. 1977).

The sheriff's office states the requested information relates to a pending criminal case. Based on this representation, we the release of the information not subject to section 552.022 would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177, 186-87 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (delineating law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, which must be released, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license or driver's license issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1). The sheriff's office must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, with the exception of basic information, which must be released, the sheriff's office may withhold the information not subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The sheriff's office must release the remaining information.

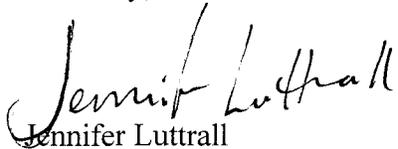
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<sup>1</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

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,



Jennifer Luttrall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JL/akg

Ref: ID# 547056

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)