



February 24, 2015

Ms. Christina Weber
Assistant City Attorney
City of Arlington
P.O. Box 90231
Arlington, Texas 76004-3231

OR2015-03578

Dear Ms. Weber:

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# 554550 (Arlington ORR# W018258-120214).

The City of Arlington (the "city") received a request for "all complaints and/or discipline against" a named police officer, including any internal affairs investigative documents. You claim the submitted information is exempted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information includes court-filed documents subject to section 552.022(a)(17) of the Government Code. Section 552.022(a)(17) 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 you assert these documents are exempted from public disclosure under 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

¹We note the requestor excluded "personal information, such as [date of birth], phone numbers, [and] addresses[.]"

to section 552.108 subject to waiver). Therefore, the city may not withhold the court-filed documents, which we have marked, under section 552.108. However, because section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information made confidential under law, we will address your arguments under this section for the court-filed documents, as well as for the remaining information. Further, we will address your arguments under section 552.108 for the information not subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code.

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 chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer’s accident report). Section 550.065(b) states, except as provided by subsection (c) or subsection (e), accident reports are privileged and confidential. Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for release of an accident report to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). Under this provision, the Texas Department of Transportation or another governmental entity is required to release a copy of an accident report to a person who provides the agency with two or more pieces of information specified by the statute.

The submitted information includes a CR-3 accident report completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. In this instance, the requestor has not provided the city with two of the three pieces of required information pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4). Accordingly, the city must withhold the submitted CR-3 accident report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part, as follows:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

- (1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and
- (2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under

this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

...

(h) This section does not apply to an investigation of child abuse or neglect in a home or facility regulated under Chapter 42, Human Resources Code.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a), (h). You contend the information you have marked is confidential under section 261.201(a). In this instance, however, we understand the information at issue is related to an investigation of alleged abuse or neglect that occurred in a child care facility that is regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services under chapter 42 of the Human Resources Code. Section 261.201 does not apply to an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect in a home or facility regulated under chapter 42. *Id.* § 261.201(h). Therefore, section 261.201(a) of the Family Code is not applicable to the information you have marked, and the city may not withhold the information at issue under section 552.101 of the Government Code on that basis.

We next address your claim under section 552.108 of the Government Code for the marked information not subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code. Section 552.108(a)(1) 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 requested information 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 (Tex. 1977). We note section 552.108 is generally not applicable to the records of an internal affairs investigation that is purely administrative in nature and does not involve the investigation or prosecution of crime. *See City of Fort Worth v. Cornyn*, 86 S.W.3d 320 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.); *Morales v. Ellen*, 840 S.W.2d 519 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1992, writ denied) (statutory predecessor to section 552.108 not applicable to internal investigation that did not result in criminal investigation or prosecution); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 350 at 3-4 (1982). However, you inform us the information at issue relates to a pending criminal investigation and prosecution. Based on your representation, we conclude the city has demonstrated release of the information at issue 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 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are 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 the court-filed documents and basic information, you may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.²

We note some of the remaining information, including a portion of the basic information, is excepted from public disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with the doctrine of common-law privacy. Section 552.101 also encompasses 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); see also Open Records Decision No. 628 at 3 (1994) (identities of juvenile victims of serious sexual offenses must be withheld on basis of common-law privacy).

Upon review, we find the information we have marked satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, the city must withhold the submitted CR-3 accident report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. Except for the information subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code and basic information, the city may withhold the information you have marked under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The city must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The city 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.

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

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,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/dls

Ref: ID# 554550

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)