



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 13, 2015

Ms. June Harden
Assistant Attorney General
Assistant Public Information Coordinator
General Counsel Division
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 12548
Austin, Texas 78711-2548

OR2015-04908

Dear Ms. Harden:

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# 557043 (OAG PIR No. 14-40562).

The Office of the Attorney General (the "OAG") received a request for information regarding a specified claim number for Crime Victims' Compensation benefits. You state the OAG will release some of the requested information. You claim the remaining 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.

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: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). By its terms, section 552.108 applies only to a law enforcement agency or a prosecutor. This office has concluded, however, that where an incident involving alleged criminal conduct is still under active investigation or prosecution, section 552.108 may be invoked by any proper custodian of information that relates to the incident. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 474 at 4-5 (1987), 372 (1983). Where a non-law enforcement agency has custody of information relating to the pending case of a law enforcement agency, the custodian of records may withhold the information if it provides this office with a demonstration that the information relates to a pending case and a representation from the law enforcement agency that it wishes to have the information withheld.

You state the submitted information consists of an offense report of the Houston Police Department (the "department") that is maintained by the Crime Victims' Compensation Division of the OAG as part of the requestor's claim file. You further state the department asks the OAG to withhold the submitted information from disclosure so as not to interfere with the department's criminal investigation, which the department states is currently inactive pending further leads. You state the department informed the OAG that the statute of limitations for the offenses at issue in the submitted information has not run, and the case may be reactivated once additional leads are developed. Based on these representations and our review, we agree release of the submitted information 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). Accordingly, the OAG may withhold the submitted information pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1) 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. Godden
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KLK/cz

Ref: ID# 557043

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)