



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 28, 2015

Mr. James Kopp  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of San Antonio  
P.O. Box 839966  
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

OR2015-10429

Dear Mr. Kopp:

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# 570220 (COSA Nos. W067543, W067545, and W067546).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received three requests from the same requestor for information pertaining to three named officers and a specified incident. You state the city does not possess information responsive to portions of the requests.<sup>1</sup> You state the city will release some information. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, we note the submitted information contains court-filed documents subject to section 552.022 of the Government Code. Section 552.022(a) provides, in relevant part:

(a) [T]he following categories of information are public information and not excepted from required disclosure unless made confidential under this chapter or other law:

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when a request for information was received or to prepare new information in response to a request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266, 267-68 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

<sup>2</sup>We assume the representative sample of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

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(17) information that is also contained in a public court record[.]

Gov't Code § 552.022(a)(17). The submitted information contains court-filed documents that are subject to subsection 552.022(a)(17) and must be released unless they are made confidential under the Act or other law. *See id.* You seek to withhold the information subject to subsection 552.022(a)(17) under section 552.108 of the Government Code. However, section 552.108 is a discretionary exception and does not make information confidential under the Act. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 663 at 5 (1999) (waiver of discretionary exceptions), 177 at 3 (1977) (statutory predecessor to Gov't Code § 552.108 subject to waiver).* Therefore, the marked court-filed documents may not be withheld under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Portions of the court-filed documents are subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.<sup>3</sup> As section 552.130 makes information confidential under the Act, we will consider the applicability of this exception to the court-filed documents.

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 section 143.089 of the Local Government Code. We note the city is a civil service city under chapter 143 of the Local Government Code. Section 143.089 provides for the maintenance of two different types of personnel files for each police officer employed by a civil service city: one that must be maintained as part of the officer's civil service file and another that the police department may maintain for its own internal use. *See Local Gov't Code § 143.089(a), (g).* Under section 143.089(a), the officer's civil service file must contain certain specified items, including commendations, periodic evaluations by the police officer's supervisor, and documents relating to any misconduct in any instance in which the department took disciplinary action against the officer under chapter 143 of the Local Government Code. *Id.* § 143.089(a)(1)-(3). Chapter 143 prescribes the following types of disciplinary actions: removal, suspension, demotion, and uncompensated duty. *Id.* §§ 143.051-.055; *see* Attorney General Opinion JC-0257 (2000) (written reprimand is not disciplinary action for purposes of Local Gov't Code chapter 143). In cases in which a police department investigates a police officer's misconduct and takes disciplinary action against an officer, it is required by section 143.089(a)(2) to place all investigatory records relating to the investigation and disciplinary action, including background documents such as complaints, witness statements, and documents of like nature from individuals who were not in a supervisory capacity, in the police officer's civil service file maintained under

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<sup>3</sup>The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).*

section 143.089(a). *See Abbott v. Corpus Christi*, 109 S.W.3d 113, 122 (Tex. App.—Austin 2003, no pet.).

All investigatory materials in a case resulting in disciplinary action are “from the employing department” when they are held by or are in the possession of the department because of its investigation into a police officer’s misconduct, and the department must forward them to the civil service commission for placement in the civil service personnel file. *Id.* Such records may not be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 143.089 of the Local Government Code. *See* Local Gov’t Code § 143.089(f); Open Records Decision No. 562 at 6 (1990). Information relating to alleged misconduct or disciplinary action taken must be removed from the police officer’s civil service file if the police department determines that there is insufficient evidence to sustain the charge of misconduct or that the disciplinary action was taken without just cause. *See* Local Gov’t Code § 143.089(b)-(c).

Section 143.089(g) authorizes a police department to maintain, for its own use, a separate and independent internal personnel file relating to a police officer. *See id.* § 143.089(g). Section 143.089(g) provides as follows:

A fire or police department may maintain a personnel file on a fire fighter or police officer employed by the department for the department’s use, but the department may not release any information contained in the department file to any agency or person requesting information relating to a fire fighter or police officer. The department shall refer to the director or the director’s designee a person or agency that requests information that is maintained in the fire fighter’s or police officer’s personnel file.

*Id.* § 143.089(g). In *City of San Antonio v. Texas Attorney General*, 851 S.W.2d 946 (Tex. App.—Austin 1993, writ denied), the court addressed a request for information contained in a police officer’s personnel file maintained by the police department for its use and the applicability of section 143.089(g) to that file. The records included in the departmental personnel file related to complaints against the police officer for which no disciplinary action was taken. The court determined section 143.089(g) made these records confidential. *See City of San Antonio*, 851 S.W.2d at 949; *see also City of San Antonio v. San Antonio Express-News*, 47 S.W.3d 556 (Tex. App.—San Antonio 2000, pet. denied) (restricting confidentiality under Local Gov’t Code § 143.089(g) to “information reasonably related to a police officer’s or fire fighter’s employment relationship”); Attorney General Opinion JC-0257 at 6-7 (addressing functions of Local Gov’t Code § 143.089(a) and (g) files).

You state the information you marked is contained within the city’s police department’s internal files maintained pursuant to section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code. Based on your representation and our review, we find the information you marked is

confidential under section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code and must be withheld from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.<sup>4</sup>

Section 552.108(a)(1) 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 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). You state the remaining information pertains to a pending criminal prosecution. We note, however, the information at issue includes a DIC-24 Statutory Warning and a DIC-25 Notice of Suspension. Copies of these forms were provided to the arrestee. We find you have not explained how releasing this information, which has already been provided to the arrestee, would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Gov’t Code* § 552.108(a)(1). Accordingly, the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms may not be withheld under section 552.108. However, based on the submitted representation and our review, we conclude the release of the remaining 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). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the remaining information.

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 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.<sup>5</sup>

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator’s license, driver’s license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See Gov’t Code* § 552.130. Accordingly, in releasing the court-filed documents and the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms, the city must withhold the motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

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<sup>4</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

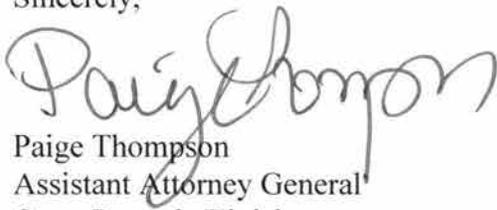
<sup>5</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

In summary, the city must release the marked court-filed documents pursuant to section 552.022 of the Government Code. The city must withhold the information the city marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code. With the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing the court-filed documents and the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms, the city must withhold the motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

You also ask this office to issue a previous determination that would permit the city to withhold information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 143.089(g) of the Local Government Code without the necessity of requesting a decision under section 552.301 of the Government Code. We decline to issue such a previous determination at this time. Accordingly, 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,



Paige Thompson  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

PT/dls

Ref: ID# 570220

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)