



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 14, 2015

Mr. Matthew L. Grove  
Assistant County Attorney  
County of Fort Bend  
401 Jackson Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2015-16862

Dear Mr. Grove:

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# 575436.

The Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (the "department") received a request for 1) the personnel policy manual for Fort Bend County's (the "county") probation department, and 2) the salary pay scale for personnel employed with the county's probation department. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the department claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the department did not submit information responsive to the second portion of the request. Thus, to the extent any additional responsive information existed when the present request was received, we assume it has been released. If such information has not been released, then it must be released at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes that no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

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 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) excepts 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).

The department seeks to withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. The department indicates the release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution of crime. Upon review, we find the department has not established how release of the information would interfere with law enforcement. Therefore, the department may not withhold any of the submitted information under section 552.108(b)(1). As the department raises no further exceptions against disclosure, the department must release the submitted 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](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 checkmark or signature mark in black ink, consisting of a single stroke that starts from the bottom left, curves upwards and to the right, and then loops back down to the left.

Rahat Huq  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RSH/som

Ref: ID# 575436

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)