



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 17, 2015

Ms. Victoria D. Honey
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
Office of the City Attorney
1000 Throckmorton Street, 3rd Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-6311

OR2015-19482

Dear Ms. Honey:

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# 585427 (CFW PIR# W044879).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for the report regarding a specified incident. You claim some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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. Section 552.101 encompasses information protected by section 773.091 of the Health and Safety Code, which provides in part:

- (a) A communication between certified emergency medical services personnel or a physician providing medical supervision and a patient that is made in the course of providing emergency medical services to the patient is confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

(b) Records of the identity, evaluation, or treatment of a patient by emergency medical services personnel or by a physician providing medical supervision that are created by the emergency medical services personnel or physician or maintained by an emergency medical services provider are confidential and privileged and may not be disclosed except as provided by this chapter.

...

(g) The privilege of confidentiality under this section does not extend to information regarding the presence, nature of injury or illness, age, sex, occupation, and city of residence of a patient who is receiving emergency medical services.

Id. § 773.091(a)-(b), (g). Upon review, we find the submitted information consists of records made and maintained by emergency medical services personnel. Therefore, we find section 773.091 is applicable to the submitted information. Thus, with the exception of the information subject to section 773.091(g), which is not confidential, the city must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 773.091(b) of the Health and Safety Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” Gov’t Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of 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). However, the information you seek to withhold on this basis relates to an individual who has been de-identified and whose privacy interest is thus protected. Therefore, we find you have not demonstrated how any of the information subject to section 773.091(g) is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public concern. Thus, the city may not withhold any portion of this information under section 552.101 in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, with the exception of the information subject to section 773.091(g), which is not confidential and must be released, the city must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 773.091(b) of the Health and Safety 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# 585427

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)