



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 23, 2016

Ms. Dawn Roberts
Assistant City Attorney
Legal Division
Arlington Police Department
P.O. Box 1065, Mail Stop 04-0200
Arlington, Texas 76004-1065

OR2016-18963

Dear Ms. Roberts:

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# 624448 (PD Reference 27475).

The Arlington Police Department (the "department") received a request for specified policies and procedures. We understand you will release some information to the requestor. You state you will withhold some of the requested information pursuant to our rulings in Open Records Letter No. 2013-17148 (2013) and Open Records Letter No. 2013-10884 (2013). *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes information is or is not excepted from disclosure). You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

¹We 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 those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Initially, we note Exhibit B was the subject of a previous request for information, in response to which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2016-14672 (2016). In Open Records Letter No. 2016-14672, we determined the department may withhold the information at issue under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. We have no indication the law, facts, or circumstances on which the prior ruling was based have changed. Accordingly, the department may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2016-14672 as a previous determination and withhold Exhibit B in accordance with that ruling. *See* ORD 673 at 6-7 (discussing criteria for first type of previous determination).

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[.]”² 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).

You state the remaining information provides “specific details concerning tactics and techniques used by the [department].” You argue release of this information would place your officers at greater risk and “increase the ability of a criminal to avoid being caught in the act of committing a crime.” Based on your representations and our review, we find the

²Although you raise section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code, based on your arguments, we understand you to raise section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code.

release of some of the information in Exhibit C would interfere with law enforcement. Therefore, the department may withhold this information, which we have marked, under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. However, we conclude the department has not established the release of the remaining information would interfere with law enforcement or crime prevention. Therefore, the department may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.108(b)(1).

In summary, the department may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2016-14672 as a previous determination and withhold Exhibit B in accordance with that ruling. The department may withhold the information we have marked, under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. The remaining information must be released.

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,



Kavid Singh
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KVS/bhf

Ref: ID# 624448

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)