



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 17, 2017

Ms. Jacqueline E. Hojem
Public Information Officer
Metropolitan Transit Authority
P.O. Box 61429
Houston, Texas 77208-1429

OR2017-15870

Dear Ms. Hojem:

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# 673468 (ORR Nos. 2017-0372, 2017-0373, & 2017-0374).

The Metropolitan Transit Authority (the "authority") received three requests from the same requestor for information pertaining to a specified incident. The authority states it has released some of the requested information. The authority claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the authority claims 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. This exception encompasses information made confidential by section 40.321 of title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Section 40.321 relates to the confidentiality of workplace drug and alcohol testing and provides:

Except as otherwise provided in this subpart, as a service agent or employer participating in the [United States Department of Transportation] drug or alcohol testing process, you are prohibited from releasing individual test results or medical information about an employee to third parties without the employee's specific written consent.

(a) A "third party" is any person or organization to whom other subparts of this regulation do not explicitly authorize or require the transmission of information in the course of the drug or alcohol testing process.

(b) "Specific written consent" means a statement signed by the employee that he or she agrees to the release of a particular piece of information to a particular, explicitly identified, person or organization at a particular time. "Blanket releases," in which an employee agrees to a release of a category of information (e.g., all test results) or to release information to a category of parties (e.g., other employers who are members of a C/TPA, companies to which the employee may apply for employment), are prohibited under this part.

49 C.F.R § 40.321. The authority states the submitted information constitutes alcohol test results of an employee of the authority. The authority further states the information is maintained by the authority pursuant to section 40.321 of title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The authority states no written consent has been given with respect to disclosure of the information in question. *See id.* § 40.321(b). Based upon these representations and our review, we conclude the authority must withhold the submitted information under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 40.321 of title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 673468

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)