



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 25, 2017

Mr. Eric K. Miller
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 4004
Huntsville, Texas 77342-4004

OR2017-22063

Dear Mr. Miller:

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# 678071 (TDCJ# AL0061).

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for specified records pertaining to the purchase of video recording equipment at jail units and specified video recordings.¹ You state you have released some of the requested information. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.134 of the Government Code. Additionally, you state the release of some of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of STS360. Accordingly, the department provides documentation showing it notified STS360 of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act

¹You state the department sought and received clarification of the request for information. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (stating if information requested is unclear to governmental body or if large amount of information has been requested, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify or narrow request, but may not inquire into purpose for which information will be used); *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380 (Tex. 2010) (holding when governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification of unclear or overbroad request for public information, ten-business-day period to request attorney general opinion is measured from date request is clarified or narrowed).

in certain circumstances). We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.²

Section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code 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 . . . release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(b)(1). Section 552.108(b)(1) 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.). To prevail on its claim that subsection 552.108(b)(1) excepts information from disclosure, a governmental body must do more than merely make a conclusory assertion that releasing the information would interfere with law enforcement. Instead, the governmental body must meet its burden of explaining how and why release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention. *See* Open Records Decision No. 562 at 10 (1990) (construing statutory predecessor). This office has concluded that section 552.108(b) excepts from public disclosure information relating to the security or operation of a law enforcement agency. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 531 (1989) (release of detailed use of force guidelines would unduly interfere with law enforcement), 252 (1980) (section 552.108 of the Government Code is designed to protect investigative techniques and procedures used in law enforcement), 143 (1976) (disclosure of specific operations or specialized equipment directly related to investigation or detection of crime may be excepted). Section 552.108(b)(1) is not applicable, however, to generally known policies and procedures. *See, e.g.*, ORDs 531 at 2-3 (Penal Code provisions, common law rules, and constitutional limitations on use of force not protected), 252 at 3 (governmental body failed to indicate why investigative procedures and techniques requested were any different from those commonly known).

The department states the recordings at issue reveal movements of correctional officers and inmates, the layout of the units at issue, blind spots hidden from the view of the camera, and how officers interact with inmates. Additionally, the department states the submitted documents contain precise details of the components of the surveillance system. The department argues release of the information at issue would compromise the safety of the correctional facilities at issue. Based on your representations and our review, we agree the release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement. Accordingly, the

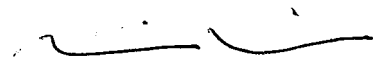
²We assume the “representative sample” of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested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

department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code.³

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,



Melanie J. Villars
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MJV/eb

Ref: ID# 678071

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

³As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.