



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 3, 2019

Ms. LaNetra S. Lary
Assistant County Attorney
Fort Bend County
401 Jackson Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Texas 77469

OR2019-00167

Dear Ms. Lary:

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# 750486.

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for a specified offense report. The sheriff's office claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the information at issue relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(2), .301(e)(1)(A). The sheriff's office states the submitted information pertains to a case that concluded in a result other than conviction or deferred adjudication. Therefore, we agree section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to this information.

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.


Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *Id.* § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976), and includes a detailed description of the offense. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the sheriff's office may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

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 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. Upon review, we find none of the basic information satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. Accordingly, the basic information is not confidential under common-law privacy, and the sheriff's office may not withhold it under section 552.101 on that ground. Consequently, the sheriff's office must release the basic information, but may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government 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,



Amy L.S. Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ALS/gw

Ref: ID# 750486

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)