



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 22, 2019

Ms. Tiffany N. Evans  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Houston  
P.O. Box 368  
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2019-05130

Dear Ms. Evans:

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# 751546 (GC No. 25632).

The Houston Fire Department (the "department") received a request for all information related to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

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). You state the submitted information pertains to a criminal 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. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 8 (1976) (arson investigation unit of fire department is law enforcement agency).

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). *See* ORD 127 at 3-4 (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston*

*Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the department may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

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 section 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. We understand you to claim the basic information satisfies the standard articulated by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation*. However, we conclude the basic information is not confidential under common-law privacy, and the department may not withhold it under section 552.101 on that ground.

In summary, with the exception of basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold the submitted 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](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,



Tim Neal  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TN/gw

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument to withhold this information.

Ref: ID# 751546

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)