



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 6, 2019

Mr. Sharbel Sfeir
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
P.O. Box 4004
Huntsville, Texas 77342-4004

OR2019-06278

Dear Mr. Sfeir:

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# 753456 (TDCJ OGC Nos. ZT0195, ZT0196, ZT0197).

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received three requests from the same requestor for several categories of information pertaining to a named inmate. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.117, 552.134, and 552.136 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions the department claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.134(a) of the Government Code relates to inmates of the department and provides the following:

Except as provided by Subsection (b) or by Section 552.029 [of the Government Code], information obtained or maintained by the [department]

is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the department.

Gov't Code § 552.134(a). Section 552.134 is explicitly made subject to section 552.029, which provides, in relevant part, the following:

Notwithstanding Section . . . 552.134, the following information about an inmate who is confined in a facility operated by or under a contract with the [department] is subject to required disclosure under Section 552.021:

...

(8) basic information regarding the death of an inmate in custody, an incident involving the use of force, or an alleged crime involving the inmate.

Id. § 552.029(8). Upon review, we agree the submitted information constitutes information about an inmate for purposes of section 552.134. However, the submitted information pertains to incidents involving the use of force and alleged crimes involving the inmate. Thus, pursuant to section 552.029, the department must release basic information from the submitted information. Basic information includes the time and place of the incident, names of inmates and department officials directly involved, a brief narrative of the incident, a brief description of any injuries sustained, and information regarding criminal charges or disciplinary actions filed as a result of the incident.¹ Accordingly, with the exception of basic information, which must be released, the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.134 of the Government Code.²

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.

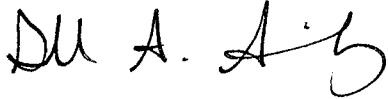
This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for

¹We note basic information for section 552.134 purposes does not include the identities of witnesses.

²As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the department's remaining arguments against disclosure of the submitted information.

providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald A. Arismendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gerald" being the most prominent.

Gerald A. Arismendez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

GAA/gw

Ref: ID# 753456

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)