



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

April 29, 2019

Mr. Brandon Dyson
Assistant City Attorney
City of San Angelo
72 West College Avenue
San Angelo, Texas 76903

OR2019-11328

Dear Mr. Dyson:

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# 762279 (ORR# 19-330).

The San Angelo Police Department (the "department") received a request for information related to case number 2019-0001657. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception the department claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Article 2.1396 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides:

A person stopped or arrested on suspicion of an offense under Section 49.04, 49.045, 49.07, or 49.08, Penal Code, is entitled to receive from a law enforcement agency employing the peace officer who made the stop or arrest a copy of any video made by or at the direction of the officer that contains footage of:

- (1) the stop;
- (2) the arrest;
- (3) the conduct of the person stopped during any interaction with the officer, including during the administration of a field sobriety test; or

¹Although the department also raises section 552.101 of the Government Code, the department has not provided any arguments to support this exception. Therefore, we assume the department has withdrawn its claim this section applies to the submitted information. See Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

(4) a procedure in which a specimen of the person's breath or blood is taken.

Crim. Proc. Code art. 2.1396. The submitted information contains a video recording that was made by or at the direction of an officer employed by the department and that contains footage of the requestor being stopped or arrested on suspicion of an offense under section 49.04 of the Penal Code. *See* Penal Code § 49.04 (“A person commits an offense if the person is intoxicated while operating a motor vehicle in a public place.”). Therefore, the requestor generally has a right of access to those portions of the information pursuant to article 2.1396 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Although the department asserts section 552.108 to withhold this information, a statutory right of access prevails over the Act's general exceptions to public disclosure. *See, e.g.,* Open Records Decision Nos. 613 at 4 (1993), 451 (1986). Because section 552.108 is a general exception under the Act, the requestor's statutory access under article 2.1396 prevails. Therefore, the department may not withhold the portions of the video recording at issue under section 552.108 of the Government Code. Thus, the requestor is entitled to receive a copy of the portions of the video recording that depict the requestor pursuant to article 2.1396 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), 301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). The department states the submitted information pertains to an active criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the remaining information.

However, we note section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the department must release to this requestor a copy of the portions of the video recording that depict the requestor pursuant to article 2.1396 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. With the exception of the basic information, which must be released, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) 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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/gw

Ref: ID# 762279

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)