



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 15, 2019

Mr. J. Eric Magee
Counsel for the Victoria County Sheriff's Office
Allison, Bass & Magee, L. L. P.
402 West 12th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

OR2019-19020

Dear Mr. Magee:

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# 775224.

The Victoria County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office"), which you represent, received a request for information pertaining to specified policies and procedures. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure the internal records and notations of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors when their release would interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention. Gov't Code § 552.108(b)(1); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 531 at 2 (1989) (quoting *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977)). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(b)(1) must explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(b)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). 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." *See City of Fort Worth v. Cornyn*, 86 S.W.3d 320 at 327 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.). This office has concluded section 552.108(b)(1) excepts from public disclosure information relating to the security or operation of a law enforcement agency. *See, e.g.,*

Open Records Decision Nos. 531 (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.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 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 sheriff's office asserts the information consists of "various law enforcement techniques and guidelines for to the day-to-day operations of the Victoria County jail." The sheriff's office argues release of this information "would interfere with the daily jail operations, law enforcement at the jail and crime prevention." Upon review, we find the release of some of the submitted information would interfere with law enforcement. Therefore, the sheriff's office may withhold this information, which we marked, under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. However, we conclude the sheriff's office has not established the release of the remaining information would interfere with law enforcement. Thus, the sheriff's office may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. Accordingly, the sheriff's office must release the remaining information.

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,



Ashley Crutchfield
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

AC/jxd

Ref: ID# 775224

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)