



KEN PAXTON  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 3, 2020

Mr. Adam Anderson  
Assistant County Attorney  
Montgomery County  
501 North Thompson, Suite 300  
Conroe, Texas 77301

OR2020-06601

Dear Mr. Anderson:

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# 814302 (ORR File 19PIA514).

The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff's office") received a request for the portions of the sheriff's office's Standard Operating Procedures Manuals that pertain to procedures officers are required to follow. 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.*, ORDs 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).

You state the submitted information, if released, would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution of crime. You explain the release of the information at issue “would allow an individual to anticipate police strategy and thwart police efforts[.]” You further explain the release of this information would endanger the safety of sheriff’s office deputies. Based on your representations and our review, we agree the release of some of the information at issue, which we have marked, would interfere with law enforcement. Accordingly, the sheriff’s office may withhold the information we have marked under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. However, we find you have not demonstrated any of the remaining information at issue would interfere with law enforcement or crime prevention. Accordingly, the sheriff’s office may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. 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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Erin Groff  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

EMG/mo

Ref: ID# 814302

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)