



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 10, 2020

Mr. Thomas Bailey  
Legal Services  
VIA Metropolitan Transit  
123 North Medina Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78207

OR2020-07533

Dear Mr. Bailey:

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# 818066.

VIA Metropolitan Transit ("VIA") received a request for two requests from the same requestor for information related to specified car crashes. VIA states it is releasing some of the requested information. VIA claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception VIA claims and reviewed the submitted information.

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 exception encompasses information made confidential by other statutes. In addition, a federal regulation enacted pursuant to statutory authority can provide statutory confidentiality for purposes of section 552.101 of the Act. *See* Open Records Decision No. 599 at 4 (1992). VIA raises section 552.101 in conjunction with section 40.321 of title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, which relates to the confidentiality of workplace drug and alcohol testing information of employers participating in the United States Department of Transportation ) drug or alcohol testing process. *See* 49 C.F.R. pt. 40 (procedures for transportation workplace drug and alcohol testing programs). Section 322 of title 49 of the United States Code authorizes the Secretary of Transportation (the "secretary") to prescribe regulations necessary to carry out the duties and powers of the secretary. *See* 49 U.S.C. § 322. Section 40.321 relates to the confidentiality of workplace drug and alcohol testing and provides:

Except as otherwise provided in this subpart, as a service agent or employer participating in the [United States Department of Transportation] drug or alcohol testing process, you are prohibited from releasing individual test

results or medical information about an employee to third parties without the employee's specific written consent.

(a) A "third party" is any person or organization to whom other subparts of this regulation do not explicitly authorize or require the transmission of information in the course of the drug or alcohol testing process.

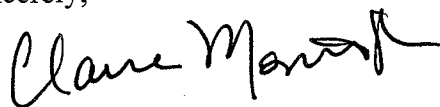
(b) "Specific written consent" means a statement signed by the employee that he or she agrees to the release of a particular piece of information to a particular, explicitly identified, person or organization at a particular time. "Blanket releases," in which an employee agrees to a release of a category of information (e.g., all test results) or to release information to a category of parties (e.g., other employers who are members of a C/TPA, companies to which the employee may apply for employment), are prohibited under this part.

49 C.F.R § 40.321. VIA states the submitted information relates to drug and alcohol test results of a VIA employee. VIA further states the information is maintained by VIA pursuant to section 40.321 of title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations. VIA states no written consent has been given with respect to disclosure of the requested drug and alcohol tests. *See id.* § 40.321(b). Based upon these representations and our review, we conclude VIA must withhold the drug and alcohol tests of a VIA employee under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 322 of title 49 of the United States Code and section 40.321 of title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

CVMS/mo

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Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)