



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 21, 2020

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

OR2020-14313

Dear Mr. Morrell:

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# 829252 (OGC# JN0046).

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108 and 552.134 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.134(a) relates to an inmate 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. We note, and you acknowledge, the submitted information pertains to an incident involving the use of force. 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. With the exception of basic information, which you state you released, the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.134 of the Government Code.¹

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,

Paige Thompson
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

PT/jlbm

Ref: ID# 829252

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹ As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining arguments against disclosure of this information.