



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 10, 2020

Ms. Charla Thomas  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Temple  
2 North Main Street, Suite 308  
Temple, Texas 76501

OR2020-28161

Dear Ms. Thomas:

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# 852851.

The Temple Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim 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 section encompasses information made confidential by other statutes. The submitted information contains police officers' body worn camera recordings. Body worn cameras are subject to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code. Chapter 1701 provides the procedures a requestor must follow when seeking a body worn camera recording. Section 1701.661(a) provides the following:

A member of the public is required to provide the following information when submitting a written request to a law enforcement agency for information recorded by a body worn camera:

- (1) the date and approximate time of the recording;
- (2) the specific location where the recording occurred; and

(3) the name of one or more persons known to be a subject of the recording.

Occ. Code § 1701.661(a). In this instance, the requestor did not provide the requisite information under section 1701.661(a) for some of the submitted body worn camera recordings. As these body worn camera recordings were not properly requested pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and they need not be released.<sup>1</sup> We note, however, pursuant to section 1701.661(b), a “failure to provide all the information required by Subsection (a) to be part of a request for recorded information does not preclude the requestor from making a future request for the same recorded information.” *Id.* § 1701.661(b). As the requestor provided the requisite information under section 1701.661(a) for the remaining body worn camera recordings, we will address your argument for this information. The recordings at issue reflect they were required to be made by law or the policies of the department and relate to a law enforcement purpose. *See id.* § 1701.661(h). We understand the recordings are or could be used as evidence in a criminal prosecution. *See id.* § 1701.661(d) (stating information “that is or could be used as evidence in a criminal prosecution is subject to the requirements of [the Act.]”). Additionally, we have no indication the recordings document an incident that involves the use of deadly force by an officer or relates to an administrative or criminal investigation of an officer. *See id.* § 1701.660(a). We note, however, section 1701.661(f) provides, in relevant part:

A law enforcement agency may not release any portion made in a private space, or of a recording involving the investigation of conduct that constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine only and does not result in arrest, without written authorization from the person who is the subject of that portion of the recording or, if the person is deceased, from the person’s authorized representative.

*Id.* § 1701.661(f). You state the remaining recordings are body worn camera recordings involving the investigation of conduct that constitutes a misdemeanor punishable by fine only and which did not result in an arrest. You state the department does not have permission for release from the subjects of the recordings. *See id.* § 1701.661(f). Accordingly, the department must withhold the remaining body worn camera recordings under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.661(f) of the Occupations Code.

In summary, as some of the body worn camera recordings were not properly requested pursuant to chapter 1701 of the Occupations Code, our ruling does not reach this information and it need not be released. The department must withhold the remaining body worn camera recordings under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 1701.661(f) of the Occupations Code.

---

<sup>1</sup>As we are able to make this determination, we need not address your argument against disclosure of the information at issue.

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,

Melanie Villars  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

MJV/rm

Ref: ID# 852851

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)