



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 9, 2022

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

OR2022-07004

Dear Mr. Overton:

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# 934122 (OGC PIA Nos. 0454-12-2021 and 0882-12-2021).

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (the "department") received two requests from different requestors for information related to the death of a named individual. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.134 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.134 of the Government Code relates to information about inmates of the department. This exception provides, in relevant part:

(a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) or by Section 552.029 [of the Government Code], information obtained or maintained by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice 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 552.029 of the Government Code provides, in part:

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). Thus, section 552.134 is explicitly made subject to section 552.029. You state the submitted information is about an inmate for purposes of section 552.134 of the Government Code. Although you assert section 552.029 of the Government Code does not apply to the submitted information, we find the submitted information pertains to an inmate's death in custody. Thus, the department must release basic information from the submitted information pursuant to section 552.029. The basic information that must be released includes the time and place of the incident, the names of inmates and of department employees who were involved, a brief narrative of the incident, a brief description of any injuries sustained by anyone involved, and information regarding any criminal charges or disciplinary actions that were filed as a result of the incident. Accordingly, except for basic information, which must be released, the department must withhold the submitted information under section 552.134 of the Government Code.

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,

Tim Neal  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TN/jm

Ref: ID# 934122

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 2 Requestors  
(w/o enclosures)