



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 20, 2022

Ms. Marisa Martinez  
Open Records Specialist  
Richardson Police Department  
P.O. Box 831078  
Richardson, Texas 75083-1078

OR2022-28852

Dear Ms. Martinez:

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# 973072 (ORR# P001273).

The Richardson Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified accident. The department claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, and 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions 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. Section 552.101 encompasses information subject to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. Section 550.065 applies only to a written report of an accident required under section 550.061, 550.062, or 601.004. Transp. Code § 550.065(a)(1). Chapter 550 requires the creation of a written report when the accident resulted in injury to or the death of a person or damage to the property of any person to the apparent extent of \$1,000 or more. *Id.* §§ 550.061 (operator's accident report), .062 (officer's accident report). An accident report is privileged and for the confidential use of the Texas Department of Transportation or a local governmental agency of Texas that has use for the information for accident prevention purposes. *Id.* § 550.065(b). However, a governmental entity shall release an accident report in accordance with subsections (c) and (c-1). *Id.* § 550.065(c), (c-1). Section 550.065(c) provides a governmental entity shall release an accident report to a person or entity listed under this subsection. *Id.* § 550.065(c). We note a statutory right of access prevails over the Act's general exceptions to public disclosure,

including section 552.108 of the Government Code. *See, e.g.*, Open Records Decision Nos. 613 at 4 (1993) (exceptions in Act cannot impinge on statutory right of access to information), 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exception to disclosure under the Act).

The submitted information contains a CR-3 accident report that is subject to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. We are unable to determine whether the requestor is a person listed under section 550.065(c). Thus, we must rule conditionally. If the requestor is a person listed under section 550.065(c) of the Transportation Code, then the department must release the CR-3 accident report pursuant to section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. If the requestor is not a person listed under section 550.065(c), then the department must withhold the report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. Nevertheless, section 550.065(c-1) requires the department to create a redacted accident report that may be requested by any person. *Id.* § 550.065(c-1). The redacted accident report may not include the information listed in subsection (f)(2). *Id.* Therefore, if the requestor is not a person listed under section 550.065(c), then the department must release the redacted accident report pursuant to section 550.065(c-1) of the Transportation Code.

Section 552.108(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the information at issue would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706, 710 (Tex. 1977). The department states the remaining information relates to a pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on this representation, we conclude the release of this information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177, 186-87 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (delineating law enforcement interests present in active cases), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in the *Houston Chronicle* decision. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle* decision). Thus, with the exception of basic information, which the department must release, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, if the requestor is a person listed under section 550.065(c) of the Transportation Code, then the department must release the CR-3 accident report pursuant to section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. If the requestor is not a person listed under section 550.065(c), then the department must withhold the submitted accident report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code, but release the redacted accident report pursuant to section

550.065(c-1) of the Transportation Code. with the exception of basic information, which the department must release, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) 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,

James L. Coggeshall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JLC/jm

Ref: ID# 973072

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)