Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

The fire service has recognized that firefighters are being diagnosed with cancer at alarming rates and has been aggressive to protect our members on numerous issues. Many states have passed Presumptive Disease laws to help those members who unfortunately have cancer, though more needs to be done to reduce the risk at the source of exposure. The influx of petroleum-based consumer goods the last several decades has created a toxic soup of carcinogens when they off gas at fire scenes that significantly increase our exposures.

Starting with our new recruits to those stalwarts that protect our communities, all firefighters should recognize they are at risk of cancer unless they help guide our profession to better practices. Help your brothers and sisters while also yourself; check out the resources we have compiled on our website to industry leading ways to reduce your exposures on the job.

Key Concepts

➢ Removing contaminants with a brush or hot water, soap and brush prior to removing SCBA mask reduces exposures.
➢ Bagging all protective gear, including SCBA, reduces cross
Resources Available

The WSCFF Health & Safety Committee has compiled numerous resources to help you implement best practices to decontaminate firefighters at fire scenes. Reducing exposures at the time of call help keep our apparatus and stations clean.

The list of resources on the website include:

- Proper cleaning procedures and sample policies to prevent further contamination of personal protective equipment
- Cost of hot water wash retrofit on existing fire apparatus
- Numerous policy examples and guidelines for decontamination at fire scenes
- Building a decon kit for your apparatus to reduce cross contamination

The Committee will continue to keep the website section dedicated to firefighter health and safety updated with new information. Contact the committee to look at other issues of concern to our members not on the website, please email them at health@wscff.org.

Healthy In Healthy Out

A committee led by Beth Gallup, IAFF Local 1747, guided the creation of Healthy In Healthy Out, a publication and video highlighting ways to protect ourselves from exposure to carcinogens. The fire ground is full of known carcinogens and removing those from PPE and your skin immediately will greatly reduce exposure. The publications guide simple solutions to reduce exposures and decon best practices. Visit the website to download the publication or watch the video.

Fire Service Cancer

STATS & FACTS

Three key firefighter cancer studies conducted over the last decade* have all shown elevated levels of certain cancers among firefighters compared to the general population. In at least two of these studies, significantly increased risks were observed in one or more age groups studied or in all firefighters for the following cancers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLON</th>
<th>NON-MELANOMA SKIN CANCER</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LUNG</td>
<td>PROSTATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>MELANOMA</td>
<td>KELAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>MESOTHELIOMA</td>
<td>NON-HODGKIN’S LYMPHOMA</td>
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<tr>
<td>MULTIPLE MYELOMA</td>
<td>STOMACH</td>
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</tbody>
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*Source: IAFF

Percent of line-of-duty firefighter deaths from 2002 to 2016 caused by occupational cancer, according to the IAFF

1,053 Number of firefighter line-of-duty cancer deaths reported from 2002 to 2016, according to the IAFF

61 Percent of line-of-duty firefighter deaths from 2002 to 2016 caused by occupational cancer, according to the IAFF

190 Number of Boston firefighters who have died from occupational cancer since 1990

3 weeks Average length of time between new cancer diagnoses among firefighters in the Boston Fire Department