



The Forever Chemicals PFAS



Minimizing Our Exposures



WHAT ARE PFAS?



PFAS, or per and polyfluoroalkyl substances, is a large family of manufactured chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s. PFAS do not occur naturally and are found in people, wildlife, and fish all over the world. PFAS are highly persistent and will stay in the body for a long time. PFAS do not breakdown easily in the environment, and are toxic to the environment, animals, and humans.

According to the IAFF: "Identifying safe and effective PFAS-free materials for turnout gear is a long and challenging process."

Unfortunately, at this time there are no manufacturers that provide a completely PFAS free set of gear. We expect there are companies working on a solution, but for now, all firefighting gear contains some level of PFAS chemicals.



IS THERE A SOLUTION?

By Howard Ong

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

PFAS chemicals are found in all layers of firefighting bunker gear. They have also been found in firefighting foam and your station duty wear.

Exposure to these chemicals has been proven to cause cancer. It is concerning that fire fighters PPE contains chemicals that harm them. This is an unnecessary and unacceptable risk. Cancer continues to be the #1 killer of fire fighters.

The other concerning point is the IAFF believes the manufacturers of this gear have knowingly used these chemicals for decades and have underreported and understated the seriousness of this issue. These bunker gear manufacturers/chemical companies are being compared to cigarette companies in the scope and scale of the misrepresentation of their products and the associated cancer risks.

PROTECT YOURSELF



- Limit your time in your bunker gear as much as possible
- Review your response protocols and determine if bunker gear is the appropriate option for non-firefighting incidents
- Do not run or workout in bunker gear
- Do not wear bunker gear at charity events
- Do not bring it into your living area or vehicles
- Do not use bunker gear as a rain/snow wear
- Wash your hands after handling your bunker gear
- Don't let kids or other visitors wear bunker gear

For more information go to www.iaff.org/pfas

