



Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association Of Connecticut

Talking Points – Cancer in the Fire Service

HB 5871

Present Workers' Compensation laws make it extremely difficult for a firefighter to collect Workers' Compensation benefits when they are diagnosed with cancer as a result of their employment.

- Firefighters in the course of their employment are exposed to toxic fumes, smoke, and other poisonous gases.
- Many of the chemicals contained in smoke have been definitively proven to be carcinogenic to humans by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- Firefighters are more likely to develop cancers at an *EARLIER* age than the general population:
- Incidence of cancers: Testicular (2.02 greater), Skin cancer (1.39 greater), Prostate (1.28 greater), Brain (1.31 greater), colon (1.21 greater), Breast cancer being studied now in San Francisco Fire Department, preliminary results forthcoming (NIOSH).
- In the hostile environment that firefighter's work, the risk of exposure is omnipresent and unavoidable due to absorption of smoke and toxic gases by their turnout gear.
- By providing annual physicals and routine blood testing, cities and towns will realize true savings by diagnosing problems earlier, at a lower cost, and in return, having healthier employees.
- Early detection and prescreening are the keys to successful cancer treatments. By taking a proactive approach rather than reactive, medical costs will be reduced.

We feel that Fire Fighters provide a high value to the communities we serve. Fire Fighters should be covered under Workers' Compensation laws should they be diagnosed with cancer in the course of their employment. It's the right thing to do.