



# ADDRESSING CANCER IN THE FIRE SERVICE

Despite known connections between firefighting and cancer, firefighters who pass away or become disabled from certain cancers as a result of their service are not currently covered under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Program.

## Background

Due to the nature of their jobs, which exposes them to toxic chemicals, stress, and other extreme conditions, firefighters in the United States are at risk for a number of diseases, including various cancers.

In 2015, a study was released by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which found that firefighters are 9% more likely to develop cancer and 14% more likely to die from cancer than the general population.

More recently, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has declared the occupation of firefighting a Group 1 carcinogen.

Despite these studies, the PSOB Program does not currently recognize the scope of the risks faced by firefighters, including the well-documented cancer risks that firefighters face due to exposure to toxic smoke, chemicals, and hazardous materials on the job.

The PSOB Program, run by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, provides death and education benefits to survivors of fallen public safety officers, as well as disability benefits to qualified public safety officers.

## Fast Facts: Firefighter Cancer

Firefighters are  
9% more likely  
to develop  
cancer than  
the general  
population.

**9%**

**14**

Firefighters are  
14% more likely to  
die from cancer  
than the general  
population.

The International  
Agency for Research on  
Cancer (IARC) has  
declared the  
occupation of  
firefighting a Group 1  
carcinogen.

**1**