

Cancer/Decontamination Program

Hired staff will be integral in enhancing our decontamination program. A firefighter's exposure to cancer-causing carcinogens is the greatest job-related risk to a Firefighter. Certain types of cancer are prevalent such as esophageal cancer. Firefighters have a 62% higher risk of contracting esophageal cancer and a 39% increased risk of dying from it. We lost a Firefighter to esophageal cancer. Other cancers that are more likely to develop are Prostate, Testicular, Mesothelioma, no-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Skin, Brain, Colon, and Leukemia.

Decontamination is key to helping the fight against Firefighter's cancer risks. We will expand our efforts with hired staff to reduce contamination. Decontamination takes time and effort but must be done to protect our people.

An example of what can happen is a Firefighter at a structure fire contracts contaminants on the protective equipment and tools they are using. Bunker gear, helmets, breathing apparatus, gloves, radio, boots, hose, nozzle, and tools they are using. They then reload all the equipment on the fire truck and the firefighter gets in to return to the station. Now, the fire truck seats, compartments, breathing apparatus brackets, floor, and anything else that is contacted is contaminated. Then they hang their gear in their locker with the rest of their stuff and it's contaminated. The breathing apparatus bottles are removed to fill with air and then the filling station is contaminated.

We take measures now, doing the best we can to hose down all of these things before loading the fire truck to return. We wash our bunker gear, hose, and equipment periodically. We have a special cancer insurance policy in place to help the fight. We will use paid staff to decontaminate after every fire and wash our volunteer's bunker gear and equipment. This will be one of the greatest achievements of having paid staff for the safety of our people.