



WHY REPORT TOXIN EXPOSURES?

Firefighters risk their lives responding to emergencies, this can jeopardize their long-term health through exposure to toxic chemicals and other occupational hazards. As a result, firefighters are at increased risk for cancer, cardiovascular disease and other health conditions.

Reporting these exposures is important because:

- Workers' Compensation, disability and survivor benefits for families can be challenged by employers
- With exposure records, physicians can more easily identify the causes and treatments for illnesses
- Exposure records make it easier to spot patterns among members of a crew
- May become important to a legal case or medical diagnosis

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Cancer Causing Toxins Firefighters Can Be Exposed To:

In a report published in 2010, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) considered there to be sufficient evidence for several firefighting-related exposures causing different types of cancer:

Arsenic: Cancers of the skin, lung, & liver

Asbestos: Cancers of the lung, larynx, & gastrointestinal tract; mesothelioma

Benzene: Leukemia

Benzo[a]pyrene: Cancers of the lung, bladder, & skin

1,3 Butadiene: Blood cancers

Cadmium: Lung cancer

Formaldehyde: Nasopharyngeal cancer

Radioactivity: All cancer sites combined

Radionuclides: All cancer sites combined

Silica (crystalline): Lung cancer

Sulfuric acid: Laryngeal cancer

2,3,7,8-tetrachloro dibenzo-para-dioxin: Lung cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, sarcoma; all cancer sites combined

Along with these exposures, there are also dozens of other firefighting-related exposures that IARC considers probable or possible carcinogens.