

PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

- Quit Smoking: The Maine Tobacco Helpline; 1-800-207-1230; www.tobaccofreemaine.org
- Ensure that all firefighters wear their breathing apparatus at fires and during the overhaul stage of the fire.
- Wear all Personal Protective Equipment at all times, this will assist in reducing the absorption of carcinogens through the skin.
- Wash all soot and debris from skin: Be sure to wash all soot and debris from your skin that you come into contact with during or after the fire.
- Clean your Personal Protective Equipment regularly to remove hazardous substances.
- Always use your truck exhaust extraction systems in your firehouse. Be sure that the exhaust removal hose is hooked up to remove the toxic fumes from the stations.
- Stay fit and exercise regularly. While it will help to make sure you can perform your job satisfactorily, it will also help reduce the likelihood of health problems and injuries.
- Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity on five or more days of the week.
- Limiting ultraviolet (UV) exposure; protect yourself from the sun.
- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains and only small amounts of red meat and high fat dairy products.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Drink less alcohol.
- Avoid a diet high in fried meats and fat.

American Cancer Society's RECOMMENDATIONS:

These recommendations are based on information that has been provided by the American Cancer Society and is specific to the cancer that are covered under the law (39-A MRSA §328-B /LD 621).

MEN:

AGE 20 TO 44:

At the time of a check-up, examination for cancer of the thyroid, oral cavity, skin, lymph nodes and testicles.

AGE 45 TO 49:

At the time of a check-up, examination for cancer of the thyroid, oral cavity, skin, lymph nodes and testicles.

- Every Year: Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) and a Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) testing for men at high risk for prostate cancer (African American men and men with a father, brother or son with prostate cancer at a young age).

AGE 50 AND OLDER:

At the time of a check-up, examination for cancer of the thyroid, oral cavity, skin, lymph nodes and testicles.

- Every Year: Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) and a Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) should be offered to average risk men.
- PSA and DRE for high risk men.
- One of the following (Colon):
 - Yearly stool blood test, or...
 - Flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years, or...
 - Colonoscopy every ten years, or...
 - Double-contact barium enema every five years

It is strongly recommended that you consult with your personal physician on the latest procedures to screen for the cancers that are covered under this law in Maine.

WOMEN:

At the time of a check-up, examination for cancer of the breast, thyroid, oral cavity, skin and lymph nodes.

It is strongly recommended that women consult with their personal physician on screenings for the cancers that are covered under this law in Maine.

The statements contained in this brochure represent the best information available to the Professional Fire Fighters of Maine at this time, and are intended to make all firefighters in Maine aware of this new law. Anyone with a potential claim under this new law should consult with the PFFM or with an attorney and not rely on the general information contained within.

An Act Allowing Workers' Compensation Benefits for Firefighters Who Contract Cancer

Informational Brochure on Firefighters & Cancer



AN ACT ALLOWING WORKERS' COMPENSATION BENEFITS FOR FIREFIGHTERS WHO CONTRACT CANCER

In 2009, the Legislature passed LD 621 and it was signed by Governor John Baldacci on June 16, 2009. The law became effective on September 12, 2009.

The law is based on scientific studies performed both nationally and internationally that have found that firefighters have significantly greater incidents of certain cancers than the general public. The law creates a rebuttable presumption that will qualify a firefighter who is diagnosed with certain cancers covered by the law for workers' compensation benefits.

It is extremely important to note that if firefighters want to "qualify" for this presumption, they must have a cancer screening by September 12, 2011.

If you are diagnosed with one of the covered cancers: kidney cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, colon cancer, leukemia, brain cancer, bladder cancer, multiple myeloma, prostate cancer, testicular cancer or breast cancer.

Immediately fill out a first report of injury form and submit it to your employer. If you are a member of the PFFM, contact your District Vice President.

The PFFM will assist you and your family with your needs.

This pamphlet is designed to inform firefighters of the new law, and provide information on what steps a firefighter can take to prevent cancer.

Additionally, there are "qualifiers" in the new law that a firefighter must meet in order to qualify for the presumption.

THESE QUALIFIERS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- The firefighter, during the time of employment, must have undergone a standard, medically acceptable test for evidence of the cancer for which the presumption is sought or evidence of the medical conditions derived from the disease, which test failed to indicate the presence or condition of cancer.
- The firefighter must have been employed as a firefighter for 5 years and regularly responded to firefighting or emergency calls.
- Must be employed as an active duty firefighter or to be an active member of a volunteer fire association with no compensation other than injury and death benefits whose duties include the extinguishment of fires.
- The presumption applies to a firefighter who is diagnosed with cancer within 10 years of the firefighter's last active employment as a firefighter or prior to attaining 70 years of age, whichever occurs first.

PFFM – www.pffmaine.org
American Cancer Society – www.cancer.org

One of the qualifiers for the presumption is the requirement that a firefighter, during the time of employment, must have undergone a standard, medically acceptable test for evidence of the cancer for which the presumption is sought or evidence of the medical conditions derived from the disease, which test failed to indicate the presence or condition of cancer.

These tests need to be performed by a medical professional. Firefighters should have the option of having the test's evaluation results placed in their personnel files. If they choose this option, they should also retain a copy in their own files in order to establish that this qualifier was met.

We suggest that IAFF Locals negotiate language into their collective bargaining agreements that would require these tests to take place as part of the pre-employment physicals or as a department policy. IAFF Locals should consult the PFFM for specific proposed language.

A sample of such language is as follows:
The employer shall include as part of the pre-employment physical examinations of any applicant a cancer screening evaluation based on the age and sex of the applicant as recommended by the American Cancer Society.

The employer shall also provide each current employee an opportunity to undergo a cancer screening evaluation as recommended by the American Cancer Society at no cost to the employee.

The employee shall maintain a copy of the results of any cancer screening evaluation. The evaluation, at the employee's option, may be a part of their permanent personnel file.