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## KEY PREVENTIVE INITIATIVES

The Firefighter Cancer Support Network recommends a dozen actions firefighters should take to protect themselves, their families, and their fellow firefighters.



Use SCBA from initial attack to finish of overhaul.  
(Not wearing SCBA in both active and post-fire environments is the most dangerous voluntary activity in the fire service today.)



Do gross decon of PPE while on scene to remove as much soot and particulates as possible.



Use cleansing wipes to remove as much soot as possible from head, neck, jaw, throat, underarms and hands while still on scene.



Change your clothes and wash them immediately after a fire.



Shower thoroughly after a fire —preferably within the hour.



Clean your PPE, gloves, hood and helmet immediately after a fire.



Do not take contaminated clothes or PPE home or store them in your vehicle.



Decon fire apparatus interiors after fires.



Keep bunker gear out of living and sleeping quarters.



Don't use tobacco products.



Use sunscreen or sunblock.



Schedule annual medical exams.



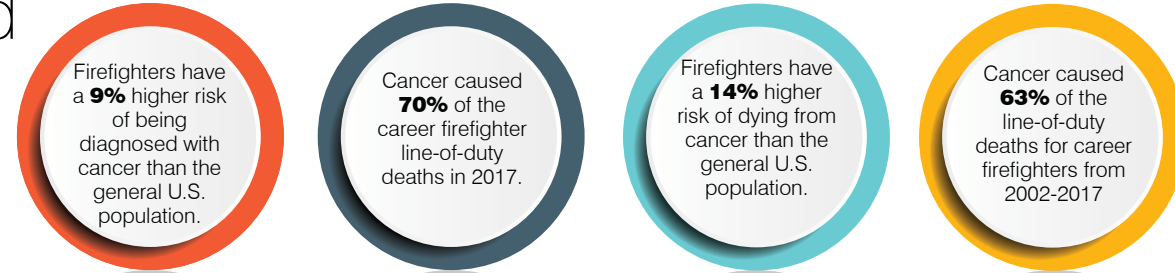
# WHAT EVERY FIREFIGHTER'S CAREGIVER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CANCER

...AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

# THE FACTS

A firefighter's exposure to danger is one significant factor that makes the occupation different from most others. Your spouse can face danger at every call. What many spouses don't know is that during the course of their work, firefighters are exposed to harmful substances at the fire scene as well as at the firehouse. These substances are causing an alarming increase in various types of firefighter cancer.

**Cancer** is the most dangerous threat to firefighter health and safety today. >>



Cancer is the most dangerous and under-recognized threat to the health and safety of our firefighters.

**Multiple studies have shown statistically higher rates of different cancers in firefighters compared to the general population. Firefighters' risks are significantly higher for some specific types of cancer, including:**

- Testicular cancer (2.02 times greater risk)
- Mesothelioma (2.0 times greater risk)
- Multiple myeloma (1.53 times greater risk)
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (1.51 times greater risk)
- Skin cancer (1.39 times greater risk)
- Malignant melanoma (1.31 times great risk)
- Brain cancer (1.31 times greater risk)
- Prostate cancer (1.28 times greater risk)
- Colon cancer (1.21 times great risk)
- Leukemia (1.14 times greater risk)

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can help your firefighter spouse reduce his or her risk for occupational cancer. You've already taken the first step by reading this! Now, we urge you to learn more about the cancer epidemic and the cancer-prevention training and tactics available to all firefighters.

Cancer prevention starts with personal accountability. Encourage your spouse to schedule an annual physical with an aggressive cancer screening right away. The Firefighter Cancer Support Network has a letter your spouse can print and take to the doctor. The letter, written by a physician who started his career as a Boston firefighter, explains firefighters' increased cancer risks and suggests important cancer screening tests.

You can download the letter at [bit.ly/FF\\_cancer\\_MD\\_letter](http://bit.ly/FF_cancer_MD_letter).

Recognizing cancer's terrible threat, firefighters are making some important changes to their operations, tactics, training, and fitness. You can find many cancer-prevention resources to share with your spouse on FCSN's website. Visit [FirefighterCancerSupport.org](http://FirefighterCancerSupport.org) for a plethora of research and reference material.

# THE CAREGIVER ROLE

Everyone remembers the moment when they hear the words, "You have cancer."

Whether the diagnosis is one's own or that of a loved one, life changes in an instant and the search for – and acceptance of – a "new normal" begins.

As a caregiver for a firefighter diagnosed with cancer, it's important to remember that you have two families – those in your house and those in the firehouse. Your firefighter family can play a significant supporting role during the diagnosis, treatment, and recovery phases. Firefighters may provide meals, mow the lawn, and take the kids to soccer practice. Some will stay in regular contact just to check on everyone. You may find that firefighter visitors, cards, meals, and calls can make it easier for you and your family to endure the often-grueling schedule of treatments, appointments, and lifestyle changes.

Being a caregiver brings its own unique set of challenges and opportunities. It's very easy for caregivers to overextend themselves, especially if they're also caring for children. Caregivers must take the necessary "time outs" to support themselves, which in turn helps the health and wellness of the family. Without proper relaxation and self-care, caregivers may find themselves hard pressed to provide the care necessary during these critical weeks, months, or years.

You may notice that your recently diagnosed firefighter with cancer pushes to get back to duty as soon as possible. This is normal. While it may be difficult to understand, firefighting offers a unique experience, one driven by strong bonds and ties. Many firefighters miss their fellow firefighters and the familiar firehouse routine. They may long for a sense of normalcy, one that has been interrupted as they go through their treatments and recovery. We suggest that caregivers accept this desire as a normal, appropriate response to a temporary loss as their firefighter navigates through this unfamiliar territory.

It's also important to keep in mind that your firefighter has his or her own unique set of fears and concerns. Those concerns likely extend beyond the firefighter's own well-being and future to those of his or her spouse and family. Sometimes fear can lead to other coping mechanisms, including anger, frustration, and alienation. We encourage you to take such responses in stride. FCSN has resources to help caregivers, so please visit [FirefighterCancerSupport.org](http://FirefighterCancerSupport.org) for details. We can help.

# WITH YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

If your spouse receives a cancer diagnosis, we can start helping immediately with an FCSN cancer-support toolbox. FCSN's signature toolbox is full of tested, proven resources to help firefighters and their families cope with the cancer diagnosis, treatment, and recovery phases. We'll send it to you right away, free of charge.

Next, FCSN offers free badge-to-badge support to fire/EMS members and their immediate families. We have more than 130 peer-support mentors – nearly all are firefighters and paramedics who are cancer survivors themselves. They have already fought many of the same battles and can offer valuable insights.

# HOW TO REACH US

If you have received a cancer diagnosis, please call FCSN's toll-free number at 1-866-994-FCSN (3276) or use the "request assistance" form at [FirefighterCancerSupport.org](http://FirefighterCancerSupport.org). One call or one click of a "send" button is all it takes to rally your spouse's brother and sister firefighters.

We can help!

To find out more, please go to [www.FirefighterCancerSupport.org](http://www.FirefighterCancerSupport.org).

Together, we can make a difference!