



Colorado State Fire Chiefs' Association

Post Office Box 3945
Englewood, Colorado 80155
Phone: (720) 874-8116
Fax: (720) 862-2181

www.colofirechiefs.org

Colorado Firefighter Cancer Survey – Preliminary Results as of April 11, 2009 (Corrected)

On May 17, 2007, House Bill 07-1008, Concerning Workers' Compensation Coverage for Firefighters Who Contract Certain Types of Cancer was enacted into law. HB07-1008 requires that, under the "Workers' Compensation Act of Colorado", if a firefighter contracts cancer of the brain, skin, digestive system, hematological system, or genitourinary system, the condition shall be deemed to have occurred within the course and scope of employment unless a physical examination of such firefighter shows evidence that such condition preexisted employment.

On February 1, 2009 the CSFCA posted an on-line survey is to collect data on the incidence of firefighter cancer in Colorado and the disposition of Workers Compensation Claims. Following is the results of this data collection effort through April 11, 2009. It is important to note that this report only reflects the incidence of firefighter cancer reported through this survey – the actual incidence could be significantly higher than reported.

Summary of Findings

A total of 21 fire departments reported having 27 firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer. All but one of these firefighters is male and 67% are career firefighters. The average number of years of service prior to cancer diagnosis reported was 19. The most prevalent type of cancer reported was cancer of the genitourinary system (44%). In 56% of the reported cancer cases, the diagnosis was made after the effective date of HB07-1008.

Of the 27 reported cases of firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer, a claim been filed with the Workers Compensation carrier in only 10 instances (37%). Only one of these claims was filed prior to the effective date of HB07-1008. At the time of the survey response, 6 of these claims have been denied, 3 were pending determination, and only one has been approved.

Reported Incidence of Firefighter Cancer

A total of 21 fire departments reported having 27 firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer. The departments that reported one or more cases of a firefighter with cancer are listed at the end of this report.

Gender of Firefighter

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	26	96%
Female	1	4%
Total	27	100%

“Serving the Chief Fire Officers of Colorado Since 1968”

Classification of Firefighter

Classification	Total	Percent
Career	18	67%
Volunteer	9	4%
Total	27	100%

Number of Years of Service Prior To Cancer Diagnosis

To be eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits under HB07-1008, the firefighter must have completed five or more years of employment as a firefighter. The average number of years of service prior to cancer diagnosis reported was 19. The high was 34 years and the low was 2 years.

Was Cancer Diagnosis Made Prior to or After Effective Date of HB07-1008 (May 17, 2007)?

	Number	Percent
Prior to May 17, 2007	12	44%
After May 17, 2007	15	56%
Total	27	100%

Primary Type of Cancer

Type of Cancer	Number	Percent
Cancer of the Brain	3	11%
Cancer of the Digestive System	4	15%
Cancer of the Genitourinary System	12	44%
Cancer of the Skin	2	7%
<u>Other</u>		
Breast	1	4%
Hotchkins Lymphoma	1	4%
Neck and Throat	1	4%
Pre-Cancerous, Possible Waldenström Macroglobulinemia	1	4%
Lung	1	4%
Not Specified	1	4%
Total	27	100%

Has a Claim Been Filed With Your Workers Compensation Carrier?

	Number	Percent
Yes	10	37%
No	17	63%
Total	27	100%

If a Claim Has Been Filed, Which Workers Compensation Carrier was it Filed With?

Workers Compensation Carrier	Number	Percent
Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA)	1	10%
Colorado Special Districts Property & Liability Pool	2	20%
Pinnacol Assurance	2	20%
Self-Insurance	5	50%
Total	10	100%

Was Claim Filed With Workers Compensation Carrier Prior to or After Effective Date of HB07-1008 (May 17, 2007)?

	Number	Percent
Prior to May 17, 2007	1	10%
After May 17, 2007	9	90%
	<hr/>	
	10	100%

Status of Claim

Following is the reported status of the claim with the Workers Compensation Carrier at the time the survey entry was made:

Status	Number	Percent
Approved	1	10%
Awaiting Determination	3	30%
Denied	5	50%
Denied, Appeal Pending	1	10%
	<hr/>	
Total	10	100%

Note: The only reported approved claim was approved by Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency (CIRSA).

Departments Reporting Incidence of Firefighter Cancer

The following fire departments reported one or more firefighters who have been diagnosed with cancer:

Department	Number	Percent
Canon City Fire District	1	4%
Castle Rock Fire and Rescue	1	4%
Cheyenne Wells Fire Department	1	4%
City of Aurora Fire Department	1	4%
Colorado Springs Fire Department	2	8%
Cripple Creek Emergency Services	1	4%
Eagle River Fire Protection District	1	4%
Federal Heights Fire Department	1	4%
Glacier View Fire Protection District	1	4%
Golden Fire Department	1	4%
Grand Junction Fire Department	2	8%
Hotchkiss Fire District	1	4%
Littleton Fire Rescue	2	8%
Longmont Fire Department	1	4%
Loveland Fire Rescue	1	4%
Pueblo Fire Department	1	4%
Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.	1	4%
South Metro Fire Rescue Authority	4	15%
West Douglas County Fire Protection District	1	4%
Unknown (No Response)	2	7%
	<hr/>	
Total	27	100%

Does Your Department Require a Pre-Employment Physical for Firefighters?

Under HB07-1008 in order for the cancer shall be deemed to have occurred within the course and scope of employment unless a physical examination of such firefighter shows evidence that such condition preexisted employment. A total of 55 departments responded to this question, with the following results:

	Number	Percent
Yes	38	69%
No	17	31%
Total	55	100%

Report to Colorado General Assembly Required

The Division of Workers' Compensation in the Department of Labor and Employment is required, in conjunction with insurance carriers providing workers' compensation insurance in Colorado, to prepare and deliver a report to the Business Affairs and Labor Committee of the House of Representatives and the Business, Labor, and Technology Committee of the Senate, regarding the number of claims allowed pursuant HB07-1008 and the costs associated with those claims [Sec. 8-41-209(3)(a), C.R.S.]. The status of this report is unknown.

On-Going Data Collection Effort

The CSFCA Firefighter Cancer Survey will be an on-going data collection effort in order to collect data on the incidence of firefighter cancer in Colorado and the disposition of Workers Compensation Claims. A secondary purpose is to exchange contact information between fire chiefs dealing with firefighter cancer issues. No personally identifying information on firefighters diagnosed with cancer is being collected.

To participate in the survey, click on the link below (or copy and paste into your browser):
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=baU5jHYgdYUfG_2fQdkyXUtq_3d_3d

A separate survey should be completed for each firefighter diagnosed with cancer, whether or not the cancer is one of the types covered by HB07-1008.

Firefighter Cancer Resources

Link to House Bill 07-1008

http://www.colofirechiefs.org/CSFCA%20Documents/1008_enr.pdf

Fire Fighter Cancer Foundation

<http://www.ffcancer.org>

Breast Cancer Alert for Women Firefighters: Chemical Exposures in Your Workplace and Breast Cancer Risk

<http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/Learning/Alert/fire08.cfm>

IAFF Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine

<http://iaff.org/hs/index.htm>

Questions concerning this report should be directed to Paul L. Cooke, CSFCA Executive Director at paul@colofirechiefs.org or (720) 874-8116. Please also contact Executive Director Cooke to update "Status of Claim" information for previously submitted surveys.