



OPFFA

OFFICE
Yonge & Wellesley Offices on the Park,
Suite 333, 15 Wellesley Street West,
Toronto, ON, M4Y 0G7
(905) 681-7111
Fax (905) 681-1489

ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

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Ontario Government Prioritizes Firefighter Health & Safety *Two new cancers added to presumptive legislation.*

The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, the representative voice for 12,000 career firefighters in Ontario, commends the provincial government for recognizing the dangers with a career in firefighting and amending the presumptive legislation to include thyroid and pancreatic cancers on the list of occupational diseases.

Cancer is the leading cause of death among firefighters and accounted for more than 74% of line-of-duty deaths in 2022. "Changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act mean that firefighters and their families can focus on recovery rather than how they will make ends meet," Gavin Jacklyn, Chair of the OPFFA's Occupational Disease Committee said.

In July 2022, the cancer agency of the World Health Organization (IARC) classified cancer in firefighters as a Group 1 occupational hazard, the highest level of carcinogenic intake possible. Firefighters are routinely exposed to burning chemicals and other toxins through the air and their skin, while working to protect the lives and property of Ontarians.

In 2007, brain, bladder, kidney, urethra, oesophageal, and colorectal cancers, Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, leukemia, and heart injury within 24 hours after fighting a fire, were deemed occupational diseases and added to the presumptive legislation. In 2014, the list was expanded to include multiple myeloma, testicular, breast, prostate, lung, and skin cancers. Cervical, ovarian, and penile cancers were added in 2018.

"Science has shown that pancreatic and thyroid cancers should be added to the list of cancers already covered by Ontario's presumptive legislation," says Greg Horton, President of the Ontario Fire Fighters Association. "I'm grateful for the strong collaborative effort by the Ontario government to make this issue a priority, and ensure our members and their families, are supported in their time of need."

President Horton shares that over the past year Premier Doug Ford, the Minister of Labour Monte McNaughton, and Solicitor General Michael Kerzner have toured fire stations across the province and attended OPFFA events to gather information, address firefighters, and learn firsthand the impact these occupational diseases can have on the member, their family, and their extended firefighting family.

"Preventative measures, early detection, and support for those suffering and/or succumbing to occupational cancer while serving the residents of Ontario, have proven to be a priority for this government through the unwavering support of Premier Doug Ford, the Minister of Labour Monte McNaughton, and Solicitor General Michael Kerzner. With the addition of pancreatic and thyroid cancers to the list of illnesses already presumed to have come from a long career in firefighting, the Ontario government is sending the message that the health and safety of these first responders is a priority."
- Greg Horton, OPFFA President

ABOUT:

The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association ("OPFFA") provides leadership, education, support, and representation for 12,000 career firefighters in over 80 cities, towns, and regions, servicing over 85% of Ontario's population. Today's professional firefighter does more than just fight fires. In communities across Ontario, they are available 24/7, 365 days a year to respond quickly to serious medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous materials calls, industrial accidents, ice/water, and other technical rescues. OPFFA members perform community outreach to educate the public on safety and fire prevention, and support local charities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Marcia Kim
Executive Director, Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association
mkim@ontariofirefighters.org | 647.294.9196

