

RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION
FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2019

RESOLUTION NO: 2019 - 1

SUBMITTED BY: John Lehmann, Surrey Fire Service, Zone 2

SUBJECT: Firefighter Cancer Screening Coverage

WHEREAS, the Fire Chiefs' Association of British Columbia (FCABC) represents the BC fire service as an advocate for the fire service, working with government and standards organizations to improve health and safety for firefighters of British Columbia; and

WHEREAS, there is a proven correlation between firefighting and occupational cancer through scientific studies and research demonstrates that firefighters are subject to chronic exposure to known carcinogens as part of job-related tasks and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, there is significant evidence presented by the BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit into injuries and death between 2005 and 2015 that demonstrates cancer represented 86% of firefighter fatal claims; and

WHEREAS, the FCABC has worked with its provincial affiliates to advocate for the inclusion of cancers in provincial occupational disease presumptive legislation; and

WHEREAS, early detection of cancer through routine screening leads to earlier treatment associated with better disease outcomes, including improved survival and reduced morbidity.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the FCABC continue to strongly re-affirm our commitment of reducing the risk of toxic carcinogenic exposure and the resulting mortality rate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the FCABC would support a committee to engage in dialogue with WorkSafeBC to explore early detection and treatment of cancer through access to suitable pre-screening assessment tools for firefighters.

AGM action: Approved _____

 Rejected _____

 Withdrawn _____

The Fire Chiefs' Association of BC (FCABC) supports cancer screening and surveillance for firefighters and emergency responders.

BACKGROUND

In a report by the BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit (Marsden et al, 2018) that looked at the causes of injury and death in Canadian firefighters from 2005 to 2015, cancer represented over 86% of all fatal claims. The report used data from Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada (AWCBC) and WorkSafeBC. One of the key recommendations from the report was primary prevention and earlier detection, such as site-specific cancer screening, are essential to decrease the burden of cancer among the firefighter population.

In May 2018, the FCABC provided its members with an updated letter from Dr. Kenneth Kunz M.D., Ph.D. that individuals can provide to the physicians regarding cancer screening. The letter recommends that firefighters be considered in a similar category as someone with a first degree relative with cancer and as such begin surveillance as early as age 40.

With firefighter occupational cancer deaths on the rise and research supporting increased rates of cancers among firefighters due to job-related tasks, it is increasingly important for firefighters to have access to early screening and surveillance systems.

As firefighters are still considered eligible for cancer screening at the same times as the general population, despite increased rates of cancer, the FCABC should open communication with WorkSafeBC regarding provisions and funding for early cancer screening and surveillance programs.