

CULTURE CHANGE IN THE FIRE SERVICE



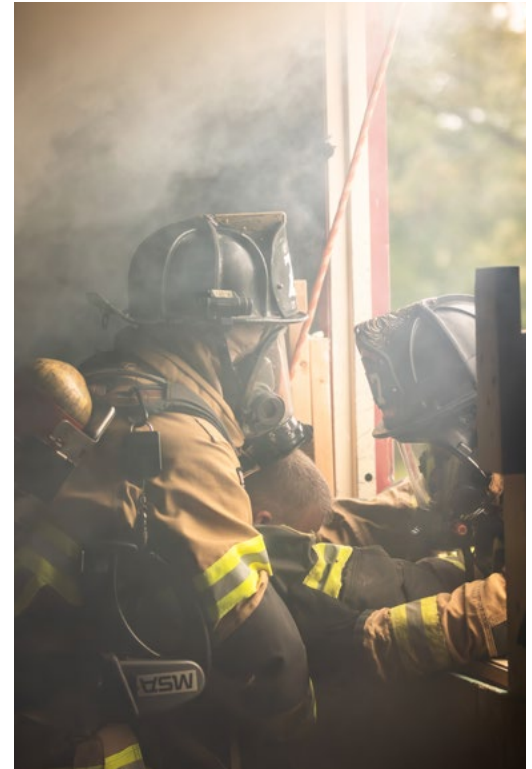
This factsheet was developed by the International Association of Fire Fighters and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network.

The firefighting culture can often result in work practices and behaviors that increase exposure to carcinogens and toxins. It is important to identify and work together in order to change this culture to promote the health and safety of fire fighters. This means promoting work practices that decrease exposure to carcinogens and eliminating those that increase exposure to carcinogens.

The ability to change culture within your department can happen at any level. To affect change around occupational cancer prevention, there needs to be a collaborative effort between labor, management, and city or government leadership.

Changes in occupational cancer prevention should focus on:

- **Awareness.** Educating personnel on occupational hazards and how to reduce the risks and exposures that cause occupational cancer(s). This can include educational materials such as factsheets, training briefs, handouts, posters, etc.
- **Action.** Implementing policies, procedures, and leading by example. It is important to provide the tools and equipment necessary to make behavioral changes and maintain them within the department.
- **Accountability.** Holding each other accountable for the efforts or processes to reduce carcinogenic exposures such as preliminary exposure reduction, using personal wipes, wearing sunscreen, and using a SCBA from the start of fire suppression activities through overhaul. There are changes everyone can make, from individual crew members to company officers.



Below are some behaviors seen in the fire fighter culture that increase exposure to carcinogens and how to change those behaviors.

