



TRAINING NOTES

DIVISION OF TRAINING



Cancer Prevention

Personal Protective Equipment Bags

Occupational cancer continues to be the leading cause of line of duty deaths within the fire service and the San Francisco Fire Department is no exception. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) research, firefighters have a 9% higher risk of a cancer diagnosis and a 14% higher chance of dying from cancer than the general United States population. In the year 2022, nearly 75% of the names added to the International Association of Fire Fighters, Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial Wall were members who died from occupational cancer.



Unfortunately firefighters aren't the only ones cancer effects. In a local study of Kitsap County firefighters in Washington, it was found that the children of firefighters had a 27.4% higher risk of developing cancer than a child of the general population. The study concluded that one of the reasons for the increase in cancer diagnoses among family members was due to the cross contamination that occurred when PPE and uniforms were transported in personal vehicles. Sadly, our membership is no stranger to this reality. In a seven year window between 2018-2024, the San Francisco Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation (SFFCPF) assisted 11 children of San Francisco firefighters and 55 spouses of San Francisco firefighters in their battle with cancer.

The SFFCPF is committed to the prevention of cancer in active and retired members of the San Francisco Fire Department as well as their families. As part of this ongoing commitment, the foundation has purchased structural PPE gear bags that will be issued to all members of the San Francisco Fire Department. The use of structural PPE gear bags will greatly cut down on unnecessary exposures and cross contamination for ourselves and our family ultimately reducing the risk of cancer.

Tips for limiting carcinogen exposures:

- Use provided gear bags to transport gear in personal vehicles.
- Use turnout extractors following an exposure.
- Use provided plastic bags as liner in the gear bag if you must transport soiled gear.
- “Shower within the hour” following a working fire and at the end of your shift.
- Do not store turnout gear in your home.
- Wash dirty laundry at the firehouse. Do not bring it home.
- Wash turnout boots following a working fire. Dirty boots significantly contribute to cross contamination.
- Close windows to your personal vehicle if parked in firehouse to limit diesel exposure.

Resources:



**1. Kitsap County:
Children's Cancer
Study**



**2. Refined By Fire Podcast
with Dr. Peaslee
On PFAs in PPE**



**3. Firefighter PPE
Contamination Video**



**4. Support the
SFFCPF: Donations
and Payroll Deduction
Form**