
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FIREFIGHTERS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

- 1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the risk of being
2 diagnosed with cancer is higher among firefighters than the
3 general population. In a three-year study completed in 2005 by
4 the University of Cincinnati, researchers concluded that
5 firefighters face a higher risk of cancer than the general
6 population. Statistics from this study show that when compared
7 to the general population, the risk for firefighters is:
- 8 (1) One hundred two per cent higher for testicular cancer;
 - 9 (2) Fifty-three per cent higher for multiple myeloma;
 - 10 (3) Fifty-one per cent higher for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma;
 - 11 (4) Thirty-nine per cent higher for skin cancer;
 - 12 (5) Thirty-two per cent higher for brain and malignant
13 melanoma;
 - 14 (6) Twenty-nine per cent higher for rectal cancer;
 - 15 (7) Twenty-eight per cent higher for prostate cancer;
 - 16 (8) Twenty-four per cent higher for buccal cavity and
17 pharynx cancer;
 - 18 (9) Twenty-two per cent higher for stomach cancer;



1 (10) Twenty-one per cent higher for colon cancer; and

2 (11) Fourteen per cent higher for leukemia.

3 Firefighters also face a greater risk of contracting
4 infectious diseases and illnesses associated with exposure to
5 patient care and biochemical substances due to bioterrorism.

6 The purpose of this Act is to provide firefighters with
7 comprehensive medical coverage through workers' compensation
8 benefits by establishing a rebuttable presumption that a
9 firefighter who suffers from cancer, blood-borne infectious
10 diseases, and exposure to biochemical substances contracted the
11 condition in the course of employment.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 386, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
14 and to read as follows:

15 "§386- Injuries covered; firefighters. (a) In addition
16 to the injuries covered pursuant to section 386-3, if a
17 firefighter develops cancer or leukemia, suffers from blood-
18 borne infectious disease, or develops methicillin-resistant
19 staphylococcus aureus skin infection during a period that the
20 firefighter is in the course of employment, the cancer,
21 leukemia, blood-borne infectious disease, or methicillin-



1 resistant staphylococcus aureus skin infection shall be presumed
2 to arise out of and in the course of the employment.

3 (b) This presumption under subsection (a) is rebuttable
4 and may be rebutted by evidence that the primary site of the
5 cancer has been established and that the carcinogen to which the
6 member has demonstrated exposure is not reasonably linked to the
7 disabling cancer. Unless so controverted, the appeals board is
8 bound to find in accordance with the presumption. This
9 presumption shall be extended to a member following termination
10 of service for a period of three calendar months for each full
11 year of the requisite service, but not to exceed sixty months in
12 any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked
13 in the specified capacity.

14 (c) No compensation shall be allowed for an injury
15 incurred by an employee by the employee's wilful intention to
16 injure oneself or another by actively engaging in any unprovoked
17 non-work related physical altercation other than in self-
18 defense, or by the employee's intoxication."

19 SECTION 3. (a) The Hawaii state fire council shall
20 develop minimum standards and procedures to ensure the health
21 and safety of firefighters and first responders who are or may
22 be exposed to hazardous materials or situations in the course of



1 their duties. The Hawaii state fire council shall take steps to
2 ensure that personnel are trained regularly with regard to these
3 minimum standards and procedures.

4 (b) The Hawaii state fire council shall urge county fire
5 departments to conduct an inventory of fire stations to ensure
6 that the fire stations meet environmental health and safety
7 standards to mitigate the long term health effects on their
8 personnel.

9 (c) As part of the minimum standards and procedures, the
10 Hawaii state fire council shall require each fire station to
11 employ best practices that limit an employee's exposure to
12 hazardous materials by isolating equipment and material exposed
13 in the field, proper cleaning protocol, and regular testing of
14 the station for contaminants.

15 (d) The Hawaii state fire council shall submit its report
16 to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the
17 convening of the regular session of 2015 that outlines its
18 progress in accordance with this Act.

19 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

20 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.



Report Title:

Firefighters; Presumption

Description:

Provides firefighters with comprehensive medical coverage through workers compensation benefits by establishing a rebuttable presumption that a firefighter who suffers from cancer, blood-borne infectious disease, or exposure to biochemical substances contracted the condition in the course of employment. Requires the Hawaii State Fire Council to develop standards and procedures to ensure health and safety of firefighters who may be exposed to hazardous materials in the course of their duties. Effective July 1, 2014. (HB1705 HD1)

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