



NVFC Position Statement Supporting the National Firefighter Registry

Studies show that firefighters may have a greater risk of some types of cancer due to their exposure to smoke, the by-products of combustion, and hazardous chemicals while responding to and operating at incidents. The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) strongly supports the National Firefighter Registry (NFR), which will facilitate a greater understanding of cancer risk in firefighters.

Many existing studies that have shown potential links to cancer and firefighting lack participation from volunteer firefighters and contain other significant knowledge gaps. The NFR will close these knowledge gaps and provide the first comprehensive, national data source in the United States for studying the relationship between firefighting and cancer.

The NFR will help researchers to better understand and reduce cancer in firefighters by matching the information provided by participating NFR firefighters with cancer diagnosis information from state cancer registries. This matching process will allow the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to study the relationship between firefighting and cancer outcomes over time.

The NVFC appreciates that privacy and data security are top priorities for the NFR. It is very important to our members that NIOSH strongly adhere to its commitments to ensuring a secure website using multi-factor authentication, storing data securely with multiple layers of encryption and keeping data confidential and accessible only to NIOSH researchers.

The success of the NFR strongly depends upon the number of firefighters who enroll in it. It is especially important for volunteer firefighters to participate as their volunteer occupation is often not captured elsewhere, meaning illness among volunteers may be underrepresented. The more firefighters participate, the more data NIOSH will have to develop informed initiatives to reduce cancer in the fire service.

Therefore, the NVFC's Health, Safety, and Training Committee:

- Strongly supports the NFR and NIOSH's goal to enroll at least 200,000 firefighters in the registry.
- Strongly recommends that *all* members of the fire service enroll in the NFR.

For more information on how firefighters can reduce their risks of occupational cancer, read the Lavender Ribbon Report and Lavender Ribbon Report Update, available at www.nvfc.org/lrr.