



# Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance

Steering Committee Meeting  
Phoenix, Arizona – May 5, 2015

## Action Plan

A meeting of the Steering Committee for the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance was held at Phoenix Fire Department Headquarters on May 5, 2015. Chief Dennis Compton facilitated the meeting. A list of meeting attendees is included on the last page of this document.

The recommendations from the January 2015 Occupational Cancer in the Fire Service Strategy Meeting were reviewed. The Steering Committee was then presented with six tasks and asked to make recommendations including 1) potential action items; 2) identifying organizational support; and 3) a suggested starting timeframe for each action item, noting that many of the action items will include ongoing activities. Timeframe estimates were defined as:

- Short term-up to 12 months;
- Medium term-up to 24 months; and
- Long term-up to 36 months.

### 1. Identify potential steps related to research gaps and funding

#### Action Item 1.1 – Convene the 3rd National Fire Service Research Agenda Symposium

Timeframe: Short term

Background: The 1st Research Agenda Symposium was held in 2005 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Research Agenda Symposium was held in 2011. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Symposium would include deliberations on all fire service research including firefighter occupational cancer. Given the amount of research and interest surrounding firefighter occupational cancer, the Symposium would likely include cancer as a major issue to be considered.

Organizational Support: The NFFF has coordinated and staffed the first two symposia, and is willing to continue in this role. Other participants could include, but are not limited to:

- Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN)
- International Association of Black Professional Firefighters (IABPFFF)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)
- International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
- International Association of Women in the Fire & Emergency Services (i-Women)
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors (ISFSI)

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)
- North American Fire Training Directors (NAFTD)

**Action Item 1.2 – Discuss cancer research at the next Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program Criteria Development Meeting**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program convenes an annual meeting to modify and develop criteria for the grant guidance. Current AFG guidance includes the priorities from previous National Fire Service Research Agenda Symposia. It would be valuable to provide information to the AFG criteria development meeting attendees on the research priorities on firefighter occupational cancer.

Organizational Support: Criteria Development Meetings are typically attended by representatives from:

- Congressional Fire Service Institute (CFSI)
- IAFC
- IAFF
- International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI)
- ISFSI
- NAFTD
- National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM)
- NFPA
- NVFC

**Action Item 1.3 – Seek funding mechanisms for cancer research**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: It is important to seek and retain sources of funding for firefighter occupational cancer research in addition to the funds provided by AFG.

Organizational Support:

- CFSI
- Major fire service organizations

**Action Item 1.4 – Explore the establishment of a Firefighter Cancer Research Center of Excellence**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: The goal of the Firefighter Cancer Research Center of Excellence would be to coordinate and prioritize research related to firefighter occupational cancer. It

would serve as a central information point for researchers and firefighters. The Center of Excellence would be a clearinghouse for research discoveries and for details of current research. The Center of Excellence would promote efficiency by assuring that all research adds to the body of knowledge on firefighter occupational cancer.

Organizational Support: The Center could be coordinated by a fire service organization or by an academic research institution and could collaborate with IAFC's Researchers Creating Usable Emergency Solutions (RESCUES), major fire service organizations and research entities.

### **Action Item 1.5 – Convene a meeting to identify specific research gaps in current firefighter occupational cancer research efforts**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: Gaps in the current research on firefighter occupational cancer should be discussed at the next meeting of the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance. Issues that may be addressed include methodologies to provide exposure-related data collection; prevention methodology and efficacy; underrepresented populations from previous research; research-to-practice methodologies; and studies establishing a direct link between firefighting and cancer.

Organizational Support: The NFFF could coordinate a meeting of the Fire Service Occupational Alliance comprised of representatives from fire service organizations, researchers, governmental partners and industry partners.

## **2. Identify potential steps related to prevention efforts, including a discussion of model policies**

### **Action Item 2.1 – Provide awareness and prevention information on firefighter occupational cancer**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: It was recommended to provide current awareness and prevention information to firefighters and to strategize on the creation and dissemination of new information. Steps that can be taken now include incorporating occupational cancer prevention and research information into IFSTA manuals and IAFF on-line programs. FCSN materials can be distributed more widely, and the FCSN White Paper can be included into required reading for promotional exams. Videos on firefighter cancer developed by Boston, San Antonio, and San Francisco fire departments can be distributed widely. Information should also be disseminated on protection of the firefighter's family from risk due to exposure to turnout gear and uniforms.

Organizational Support: Groups that will likely be involved include IAFF, International Fire Service Training Association-Fire Protection Publications (IFSTA-FPP), FCSN, IABPFF and other fire service organizations.

### **Action Item 2.2 – Develop a unified branding message related to firefighter occupational cancer**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: Develop and disseminate a campaign related to firefighter occupational cancer-related issues. The effort may be similar to successful campaigns such as breast cancer awareness and the Everyone Goes Home® (EGH) program. Ideas developed at the meeting include kNOw Firefighter Cancer, **KNOW** Firefighter Cancer, Clean Up Firefighter Cancer, #Alarm4Cancer, Suppress Firefighter Cancer, and Extinguish Firefighter Cancer.

Organizational Support: The Steering Committee referred this item to the agenda for the next meeting of the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance.

### **Action Item 2.3 – Develop and distribute a Firefighter Cancer Awareness and Prevention Tool Kit**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: An electronic tool kit of firefighter cancer awareness and prevention information should be created and modeled after the Fire Service-Based EMS Electronic Tool Kit ([www.fireserviceems.com](http://www.fireserviceems.com)). The firefighter cancer tool kit can include links to educational materials, research information, talking points, model curriculum, alarm symptom checklist, presentation templates, fire station evaluations forms and other information. The tool kit could also include sections specific for firefighter recruits, company officers, command officers, and others. The tool kit should be mobile-friendly.

Organizational Support: Similar to the Fire Service-Based EMS Electronic Kit, the creation and distribution of the Cancer Awareness and Prevention Tool Kit would be a collaborative effort involving many major fire service organizations, industry partners and cancer-related organization such as the American Cancer Society.

### **Action Item 2.4 – Include information on cancer prevention activities in Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) assessments and in the NFFF’s Vulnerability Assessment Program (VAP)**

Timeframe: Long term

Background: Seek to include information on firefighter cancer prevention as a part of CFAI accreditation and as a part of the VAP.

Organizational Support: CFAI manages the fire department assessment process and NFFF manages the VAP. Other fire service organizations' assistance would be needed to support this action item.

**Action Item 2.5 – Engage national fire service conference planners to include occupational cancer in the fire service in the general sessions and other conference events**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: A letter from the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance should be sent to the national fire service conference planners requesting occupational cancer in the fire service to be included in the general sessions of their conferences.

Organizational Support: The letter would be co-signed by the members of the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance representing major fire service organizations and other industry partners.

**Action Item 2.6 – Develop a physician's guide to firefighter occupational cancer**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: Since most firefighters go to a general physician rather than an occupational medical doctor, it would be beneficial to create a document that firefighters can provide to their own doctors. The document could include information on the current research available on the link between firefighters and cancer, the importance of getting a baseline chest x-ray, and sources of additional information.

Organizational Support: The Boston Fire Department has developed a document that could be used as a foundation for this action item. NIOSH could also provide support.

**3. Identify potential steps to presumptive legislation**

**Action Item 3.1 – Continue to support firefighter cancer research to strengthen the association between firefighting and occupational cancer**

Timeframe: Long term

Background: 38/50 states currently have some version of a presumptive law. There is a strong need to continue to refine firefighter occupational cancer research to discern links between occupational exposures and the development of cancer in firefighters. Also, because claims usually cannot be filed more than 5-10 years after retirement, the latency of cancer also needs to be considered with presumptive laws.

Organizational Support: IAFF has led the fire service in presumptive law advocacy. NVFC has begun to get more involved in this issue.

### **Action Item 3.2 – Strengthen and support promotion of prevention programs**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: Encourage firefighters to take steps immediately that will limit their occupational exposure. For example, smoking cessation programs and smoking prohibitions may assist in the adoption of presumptive cancer legislation. Encourage firefighters to take other steps that will improve their overall health and limit exposure – activities such as healthy eating, SCBA use, showering after a fire exposure, and hood exchange programs that may not be directly related to legislation but may contribute to the firefighter’s health and reduce the incidence of occupational cancer.

Organizational Support: Major fire service organizations

### **Action Item 3.3 – Provide access to a template and guide on how to file a claim with improved documentation**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: A firefighter that has received a cancer diagnosis may be unfamiliar with the occupational cancer claims process with their employer. The firefighter may also be unaware of the importance of thorough documentation in the claims process. The development of a guide or template for claim submission would provide the firefighter and his or her family with information about the claims process and examples of proper claim documentation. This material may be included in the tool kit mentioned in Action Item 2.3.

Organizational Support: Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance representatives

### **Action Item 3.4 – Provide resources to assist in filing and streamlining a claim for benefits**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: Provide resources to assist firefighters through the claims process. Local, regional, state, or national firefighter organizations may provide access to or referrals to works compensation lawyers. Assistance may also be provided by others with experience in the process or by trained peers. This material may be included in the tool kit mentioned in Action Item 2.3.

Organizational Support: Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance representatives

## **4. Identify potential steps for engaging other organizations as partners**

### **Action Item 4.1 – Identify organizations that can provide specific support and assistance**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: A number of organizations (fire service and non-fire service) and industry partners were identified as potentially providing support and assistance in this action plan. These organizations include those in the medical, social, and insurance businesses as well as organizations with an interest and presence in the fire service such as fire equipment and fire apparatus manufacturers.

Organizational Support: The Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance would need to strategize on a strategized approach to reaching out to these entities.

### **Action Item 4.2 – Leverage existing relationships that members of the fire service industry have with identified organizations in Action Item 4.1**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: Many times, a request for help will be more favorably looked upon if it comes from someone known to the organization. Firefighters, fire service organizations, and others with an interest in the fire service can seek support for the fight against cancer from organizations with which they have an established relationship.

Organizational Support: Once the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance has strategized on the specific support and assistance needed from other entities, then the organizational support can be determined.

## **5. Identify potential steps to inclusion/recognition of cancer within Line-of-Duty death criteria**

### **Action Item 5.1 – Introduce a CFSI National Advisory Council (NAC) Resolution regarding occupational cancer in firefighters**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: At the next CFSI NAC meeting in December 2015, introduce a resolution in support of Federal LODD coverage for firefighter cancer deaths, inclusive statistical reporting, and formal public recognition of firefighter LODDs resulting from cancer. The resolution needs to be careful not to damage or call into question any existing cancer presumption benefits.

Organizational Support: Potentially all NAC member organizations could support this resolution.

### **Action Item 5.2 – Identify potential supporters and non-supporters**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: Identify entities and organizations that would likely support or oppose inclusion of firefighter occupational cancer as a disease covered by the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program, or the recognition of cancer as a firefighter occupational disease.

Organizational Support: Major fire service organizations

### **Action Item 5.3 – Use the Zadroga Act as an example of Federal legislation that recognizes firefighter cancer as an occupational disease and has a compensation process for paying benefits related to firefighter cancer**

Timeframe: Short term

Background: The Zadroga Act has provided important health benefits to firefighters and others exposed to hazards associated with the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Continued funding for these programs will assure that people covered by this program retain these benefits. It also serves as a prime example of the Federal government recognizing the link between firefighters and cancer.

Organizational Support: The IAFF and CFSI are taking a lead role in efforts to re-authorize and fund the programs provided through the Zadroga Act.

### **Action Item 5.4 – Identify and quantify the financial impact of firefighter cancer inclusion in PSOB benefits, including information on cost-saving that would result from prevention**

Timeframe: Medium term

Background: A likely element of discussions on the inclusion of occupational cancer and PSOB benefits will be the projected costs.

Organizational Support: The NFFF will take the lead in estimating these costs.

## **6. Identify any next steps for the Steering Committee – documentation – future meetings?**

### **Action Item 6.1 – Continue the work of the Steering Committee and of the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance**

Timeframe: Short term



Background: "Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance" will be used as the name for the conglomeration of representatives from the January 2015 meeting. It is recommended that the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance meet as soon as possible, contingent upon funding and other scheduling issues.

The following issues were referred to the Alliance for consideration in the next meeting:

- A summary of the action items of the May Steering Committee Meeting;
- A discussion and identification of specific gaps in past, current, and planned research on firefighter occupational cancer (Action Item 1.5);
- A discussion on unified branding efforts (Action Item 2.2);
- A discussion on identifying entities and organizations that will likely support or oppose PSOB program changes to include occupational cancer (Action Item 5.2);
- Include a discussion of emerging issues; and
- A discussion of any issues that surface related to firefighter occupational cancer in the time between this meeting and the next meeting of the Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance.

Organizational Support: NFFF will continue to coordinate meetings and provide other support.

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Leadership	<b>Dennis Compton</b>	National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
Attendees	<b>Jeff Burgess, M.D.</b>	University of Arizona NIOSH-NORA
	<b>Joseph Finn</b>	Boston (MA) Fire Department
	<b>Bryan Frieders</b>	San Gabriel (CA) Fire Department Firefighter Cancer Support Network
	<b>Thomas Hales, M.D.</b>	NIOSH, CDC
	<b>Tim Hill</b>	Phoenix Fire Fighters Association Local 493
	<b>Kara Kalkbrenner</b>	Phoenix (AZ) Fire Department
	<b>Pat Morrison</b>	IAFF
	<b>Alan Rice</b>	Alabama Fire College North American Fire Training Directors
	<b>Jim Seavey</b>	Cabin John (MD) Volunteer Fire Company IAFC-VCOS
	<b>Demond Simmons</b>	Oakland (CA) Fire Department International Association of Black Professional Firefighters
	<b>Tracy Thomas</b>	City of Richmond (VA) Department of Fire & Emergency Services IAFC-SHS section
	<b>Bill Troup</b>	USFA
	<b>Mike Wieder</b>	IFSTA/Fire Protection Publications
	Staff	<b>Victor Stagnaro</b>
<b>Kevin Roche</b>		National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
<b>Tricia Sanborn</b>		National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
<b>Amy Tippet</b>		National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
Unable to attend	<b>Ron Siarnicki</b>	National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
	<b>Doug Daniels, Ph. D</b>	CDC-NIOSH
	<b>William Goldfeder</b>	Loveland-Symmes (OH) Fire Dept.
	<b>Johnny Brewington</b>	IABPFF
	<b>George Broyles</b>	US Forest Service
	<b>Don Hroma</b>	Chicago (IL) Fire Department
	<b>Bill Jenaway, Ph.D.</b>	King of Prussia (PA) Volunteer Fire Company VFIS
	<b>Richard Paris</b>	Boston Firefighters Local 718
	<b>Cathie Patterson</b>	FEMA
	<b>Maggie Wilson</b>	FEMA