

# LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING

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## NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON CANCERS LINKED TO FIREFIGHTING ACT – RECEIVES ROYAL ASSENT

The Government of Canada [announced](#) that Bill C-224 – *An Act to establish a national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting (Act)* received Royal Assent on June 22, 2023. The Act provides for the development of a national framework for the purpose of raising awareness of cancers linked to firefighting with the goal of improving access for firefighters to cancer prevention and treatment.

Starting in 2024, the Act has also designated the month of January, in each year, as “Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month”.

### Key Points of the Legislation

The following are key areas of the Act:

#### **National Framework for the Prevention and Treatment of Cancers Linked to Firefighting**

In consultation with representatives of the provincial and territorial governments responsible for health, municipal governments, Indigenous governing bodies, health care professionals, scientists and stakeholders in the firefighting community, Health Canada will develop a national framework to:

- raise awareness of cancers linked to firefighting
- support improved access for firefighters to cancer prevention and treatment

As stated in the Act, the national framework **may** include measures to

- “(a) explain and support research on the link between firefighting and certain types of cancer;
- (b) identify the training, education and guidance needs of health care and other professionals related to the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting and compile information relating to those needs;
- (c) make recommendations respecting regular screenings for cancers linked to firefighting;
- (d) promote research and improve data collection on the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting;
- (e) promote information and knowledge sharing in relation to the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting; and



- (f) prepare a summary of existing standards that recognize cancers linked to firefighting as occupational diseases.”

### **Reports to Parliament**

Before June 22, 2024, a report that sets out the national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting must be prepared by the Minister of Health. The report must also be tabled before each House of Parliament on any of the first 15 days on which that House is sitting after the report is completed.

The tabled report will be made available on the Department of Health website within 10 days after the day on which the report is tabled in both Houses of Parliament.

A report on the effectiveness of the national framework and on the state of the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting must be prepared within five years after the day on which the report is first tabled before each House of Parliament.

### **Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month**

Commencing in January 2024, the month of January in each year will be designated as “Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month”.

## Action Plan

In August 2021, the Government of Canada announced its [Action Plan](#) to protect firefighters from harmful chemicals released during household fires. This *Act* builds on the commitments made in the Action Plan which include actions to:

- ban harmful chemical flame retardants;
- support the development and use of safe flame retardants, including less harmful alternatives to chemical flame retardants in household products;
- conduct research and monitoring to assess levels of exposure;
- identify practices for firefighters to reduce harm, such as improvements to personal protective equipment; and
- share information and raise awareness.

## BC Workers Compensation Act – Cancer Presumptions

On November 8, 2022, Regional Employers Services published the Legislative Briefing titled “[Workers Compensation Act – Firefighters’ Occupational Disease Regulation](#)” regarding the amendment to the list of work-related cancers in the Firefighters’ Occupational Disease Regulation under the *Workers Compensation Act*.

There are currently 18 cancer presumptions recognized for firefighters which can be found in the [current version](#) of the Firefighters’ Occupational Disease Regulation.

If a firefighter develops one of the listed work-related cancers after a certain period of employment, it is presumed that the cancer arose from their employment. The firefighter is then eligible for workers' compensation benefits without having to provide evidence that the disease is work-related.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have any comments or questions about this update, please e-mail [RES360@metrovancover.org](mailto:RES360@metrovancover.org) or call 604-451-6558.

## SOURCES

"Legislation to further protect the health of firefighters receives Royal Assent", June 26, 2023  
[Legislation to further protect the health of firefighters receives Royal Assent - Canada.ca](#)

"An Act to establish a national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting", retrieved on June 27, 2023  
[C-224 \(44-1\) - LEGISinfo - Parliament of Canada](#)

"Government of Canada announces action plan to protect firefighters from harmful chemicals", August 11, 2021  
[Government of Canada announces action plan to protect firefighters from harmful chemicals - Canada.ca](#)