

FIREFIGHTERS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS TRAINING PROGRAM

In April 2023, the BC Fire Fighter Occupational Awareness Training (Program) was rolled out to all BC firefighters - full-time, paid-on-call, volunteer, fire administration and dispatchers. According to the [First Responder Health website](#), this no-cost 12-module online Program is “designed to enhance frontline knowledge of mental health injuries and reduce the emotional and behavioural impact of a career in public safety.” The Program is administered by the [BC Municipal Safety Association](#) (BCMSA) and First Responder Health.

On March 5, 2024, the BC Government [announced](#):

- As of March 1, 2024, this online Program will be expanded to all BC Wildfire Services staff.
- Phase 2 of the Program will include 12 new training modules expected to launch in summer 2024.

The Program

The Program, where more than 6,600 municipal firefighters have enrolled in to date, is designed to protect the psychological health and safety of firefighters and administrative staff that is supported by the latest empirical evidence on mental health and wellness. The initiative is made available through broad collaboration across a number of stakeholders that include BCMSA, WorkSafeBC, Fire Chiefs’ Association of BC, BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Association, Volunteer Firefighters Association of BC, BC Fire Training Officers Association, and BC Fire Prevention Office.

As noted in the BC Government [announcement](#), the first year of the program focuses on “helping firefighters understand mental health, learn how to manage stress and develop self-care strategies.”

The curriculum of the Program is based on lived experience of staff and subject matter experts in the field of public safety mental health and includes:

- 12 online modules
- Structured group-based discussions that (1) reinforce key learning objectives, (2) normalize common psychological stress injuries, and (3) contribute to the collective resilience of each fire fighter
- “Self-rescue” strategies toolkit at the end of year 1

What's Next?

Twelve new training modules will be launched in summer 2024.

QUESTIONS?

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

SOURCES

More B.C. firefighters will benefit from expanded psychological wellness program | BC Gov News
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024MMHA0010-000282>

BC Fire Fighter Occupational Awareness Training
<https://www.firstresponderhealth.org/bcffoat>