

Three Presumptive Cancers for Firefighters Announced

Today the Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, announced that the Ontario Government is expanding the current regulation to include three additional cancers presumed to be work-related for firefighters under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* (WSIA), [Ontario Increases Cancer Coverage for Firefighters](#).

The regulation adds ovarian and cervical presumptive cancers for female firefighters, and penile cancer for male firefighters. With the expanded presumption, once a firefighter is diagnosed with cervical, ovarian or penile cancer, the claims process for WSIB benefits is expedited, and a causal link between these cancers and a workplace exposure is not required.

The health and safety of municipal employees remains a top priority for municipal governments, as demonstrated by their continuing training and equipment investments to maximize employee safety.

The additional cancers announced today, as with the previous ones, apply to full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters and fire investigators, and are retroactive to January 1, 1960 (as currently set out in the WSIA). Under the Act, certain prescribed cancers are treated as work-related unless the contrary can be shown.

For Schedule 1 municipalities who pay premiums, there will likely be a small premium increase. Most volunteer firefighters work for Schedule 1 municipalities. For Schedule 2 municipalities (who pay the full costs of claims plus a 30% WSIB Administrative Rate), it is expected that there will be a small fiscal impact for today's presumptive cancer additions. Most full-time firefighters work for Schedule 2 municipalities.

In May 2007, the WSIA was amended to establish presumptions that could be work-related for firefighters and fire investigators. It also provided for regulation-making power to prescribe the diseases and conditions. In 2007 and 2009, the government established a list of eight cancers and associated service criteria, as well as the circumstances respecting heart injuries. Six presumptive cancers were added in 2014.

It can be noted that the municipal sector has received the highest WSIB Schedule 1 rate increases compared to other Schedule 1 employers over the past few years.