



Vancouver Fire Investigators are sworn limited commission officers

and members of the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 452. However, they do not have the benefits of presumptive disease legislation that firefighters currently have. They are currently in PERS and therefore must work to age 65 compared to LEOFF retirees who may retire in their 50's because of hazards, stress and shorter life expectancies.

EXPOSURES

Both Firefighters and Fire Investigators are exposed to toxic compounds and gasses including at least 20 documented carcinogenic (cancer causing) elements. Research has found that firefighters have 100% higher risk of testicular cancer and a 50% higher risk of multiple melanoma and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Prostate cancer a 28% increased risk compared with the general population.

FIREFIGHTERS

Firefighters go in to a structure with protective gear & breathing apparatus. They work in teams under the incident command system. They ensure the fire is extinguished and get back in service as soon as possible. Not every firefighter responds to every fire. Some will go weeks or months and not see a fire scene. They certainly are exposed to multiple hazards during this dangerous work.

FIRE INVESTIGATORS

Fire investigators are in many more fire scenes than a firefighter simply because of the specialized service they provide. Fire investigators typically spend significant time on scene. The exposure to hazardous chemicals, dust and structural dangers are frequently prolonged by several hours or even several days.



Fire investigators are often in the structure before the fire is out, before and during

overhaul. They are exposed to many of the same hazards as firefighters but when it comes to the amount and length of exposure to carcinogens and other hazards, they are at much greater risk.

HYBRID DUTIES

Fire investigators share some of the same risks as both firefighters and law enforcement. Yet for the purposes of retirement systems, and presumptive disease they are considered neither. So if firefighters have 100% higher risk to exposures then the general public, it would stand to reason fire investigators will be in the same higher risk for these toxins, because of their job duties.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Cancer:

In 1997, NIOSH initiated a study due to the fact that two ATF fire investigators in their 30's had contracted bladder cancer. They determined that their fire investigators were at risk. ATF implemented a respiratory protection program for its fire investigators in 1999 as a result of this study. While the City of Vancouver also subsequently initiated a respiratory protection program for fire investigation, the risk cannot be fully eliminated.

PHOENIX STUDY

The City of Phoenix published a study of 26 fires for post fire contaminants and found chemicals exceeding the occupational exposure limits. These included acrolein, formaldehydes, glutaraldehydes, benzenes, NO₂, SO₂, CO & polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. "The chemicals found to exceed occupational exposure limits in the Phoenix study demonstrate the potential of adverse health

effects to firefighters. This, of course, applies to fire investigators who spend more time in overhaul or post-fire environment compared to line firefighters."

Fire investigators routinely dig through fire debris for evidence, exposing themselves to substances which may sicken them years later.



POLYCYCLIC AEROMATIC HYDROCARBONS (PAH)

The American Journal of Industrial Medicine reports that a known carcinogen found in fire debris, is PAH. It states that absorption via the skin is the primary route of PAH uptake. "The skin is therefore **as** or **more** important than the airways in absorption of PAH. PAH has been linked to testicular, lung, breast, skin, bladder, prostate and other cancers.

Structural Collapse:

Nov 21, 2005 ... On January 19, 1999, a New York, 43-year-old male career fire investigator died after being crushed by a chimney that collapsed.



Falls:

On July, 18, 2000, two Illinois, arson investigators were dispatched to the scene to conduct an "origin-and-cause" fire investigation. During this investigation, Arson Investigator #1 (the victim) lost his balance and fell, pinning his camera between the left side of his chest and a bed frame/slats... ultimately *the injuries he sustained led to his death* on August 9, 2000.

Responding to Fires:

Dec 9, 2009 HOUSTON (KTRK) – “One arson investigator did not make the scene of a morning fire in the Heights. That's because the investigator is in the hospital. The arson unit was on the way to the fire when it *collided with another car* on 11th and North Durham.”

Criminals:

Fires are sometimes crime scenes

Jun 30, 2008, CHICAGO — Donald Cox was investigating the apparent firebombing of a southeast side home Sunday when *he was struck by a bullet below his left ribs...* Arson investigators usually work by themselves, but in the future, "There's going to be two arson investigators per car," Orozco said.

March 17, 2010 HENRY COUNT, Ga Fire Investigation Turns Into Police Shootout.



Chemicals:

Inhalation – gases and airborne particulates can be inhaled.

Absorption – chemicals, including dust, smoke or vapors, can enter your body through your skin or eyes.

Ingestion – chemicals can enter your body through your mouth.

Injection – chemicals can enter your body through an accidental impact, cut or puncture to your skin.

Asbestos Mesothelioma:

In the United States, over 35 million residences harbor asbestos-containing materials that have the potential to release toxic fibers into the air if they are damaged by a fire. This is a serious health risk for homeowners, firefighters and other first responders, as asbestos exposure is the only known cause of pleural mesothelioma, a fatal type of cancer that attacks the lungs and does not have a cure. Asbestos fibers are friable and can lodge in your protective gear or on your equipment during fire investigation only to become airborne again while doffing the gear or stowing it in your vehicle. The time between exposure and the appearance of symptoms can be as long as 20 to 50 years.

Exhaustion:

Fire investigators get calls at all hours to rush to a fire incident and conduct physically exhausting work similar to firefighters who have an increased risk of heart attack.

Why Vancouver Deputy Fire Marshal's not covered by LEOFF or presumptive disease legislation?

The bottom line is, DFM's were required to take a civil service test but the test was not specific to the job as firefighter.

<http://www.drs.wa.gov/member/handbooks/leoff/plan-2/leoff2hbk.pdf> page #4

See how the job description mirror's what a Vancouver's Deputy Fire Marshal does.

<http://citynet/fire/admin/jobdescriptions.asp>

WHAT CHANGE IS NEEDED?

Fire investigators should be a part of the same **presumptive disease** legislation that firefighters have due to the increased risk of cancer and other illnesses. And have the same protection of retirement's benefits because of hazards, stress and shorter life expectancies.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Dan McCoy, Deputy Fire Marshal – City of Vancouver (360) 487-7217.

LEOFF's definition of a Fire fighters

A “fire fighter” is someone employed in a uniformed fire fighter position on a fulltime, fully compensated basis, and as a consequence, has the legal authority and responsibility to direct or perform fire protection activities that are required for and directly concerned with preventing, controlling and extinguishing fires. This includes supervisory fire fighter personnel. “Fire protection activities” may include incidental functions such as housekeeping, equipment maintenance, grounds maintenance, fire safety inspections, lecturing, performing community fire drills and inspecting homes and schools for fire hazards. These activities qualify as fire protection activities only if the primary duty of the position is preventing, controlling and extinguishing fires.

The following positions are excluded:

- fire fighters who have not completed a civil service exam for fire fighter if the employer requires it
- volunteer or resident volunteer fire fighters

LEOFF -covered employers

A “covered employer” is any of the following if they employ any law enforcement officer and/or fire fighter:

- the authority of any city, town, county or district
- elected officials of any municipal corporation
- the governing body of any other general authority law enforcement agency
- four year institutions of higher education with a fully operational fire department (as of January 1, 1996) Updated March 2006

Law enforcement officers

A “law enforcement officer” is someone who is fully commissioned and empowered to enforce the laws of the state of Washington, including full arrest powers, and employed by a LEOFF employer. LEOFF-covered positions include county sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, police chiefs, city police officers, town marshals or deputy marshals. Effective January 1, 1994, general authority law enforcement officers employed by a state university or port district are also included. Directors of public safety and public safety officers may qualify if they are employed by cities or towns with populations less than 10,000.

City police are considered law enforcement officers only if they have been appointed to offices, positions, or ranks specifically created and designated by city charter provision or by ordinance.

The following positions are excluded:

- non-commissioned people in positions that are primarily clerical or secretarial
- deputy sheriffs who have not passed a civil service exam for deputy sheriff
- directors of public safety or public safety officers in cities or towns with populations of less than 10,000, if they were receiving a LEOFF retirement allowance on July 25, 1993

VANCOUVER FIRE DEPARTMENT'S JOB DESCRIPTION OF A DEPUTY FIRE MARSHAL

DEFINITION

To perform a variety of fire prevention and inspection work including fire code enforcement and fire safety education program administration; act as Public Information Officer as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receive general supervision from a division chief.

ESSENTIAL AND OTHER FUNCTION STATEMENTS-

-Essential and other important responsibilities and duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Examples of Essential Functions:

Participate in the coordination of the Fire Suppression Division's fire safety education activities; provide training on fire and safety programs, fire and life safety codes, and inspection practices.

Participate in the development and delivering fire safety and prevention educational programs to local schools, community groups, and members of the general public.

Conduct annual inspections for existing buildings and fire code permits inspections of buildings and property for fire hazards, efficiency of fire protective equipment, adequacy of fire exits, and general compliance with fire prevention laws and standards.

Advise property owners on the removal of fire hazards; enforce compliance to correct hazards.

Receive and investigate complaints regarding fire violations; recommend corrective actions and enforce compliance.

Investigate fires to determine causes and damages; keep records of fire losses, investigations, fire deaths and injuries; collect, photograph and maintain evidence; prepare detailed reports documenting investigation findings.

Respond to requests and inquiries from the fire suppression personnel, general public, contractors, architects, and media relations regarding fire and life safety codes and standards.

Assume duties of Public Information Officers at emergency incidents under the Incident Command System; act as liaison with the news media; perform public relations activities such as coordinating press conferences, preparing news releases, and preparing audio visual materials.

Examples of Other Functions:

Serve as an expert witness testifying in court cases involving fire and code violations.

Maintain a variety of records, files and maps related to fire prevention and safety activities and programs.

Conduct inspections for business license compliance.

Enter a variety of information into a computer.

Ensure various equipment used in performing duties is properly maintained.

Perform related duties and responsibilities as required.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

Fire hazards and the related prevention and abatement methods.

Principles of fire prevention and safety education, including effective teaching and presentation techniques.

Fire prevention inspection methods and techniques.

Fire fighting techniques, incident command system, and fire suppression equipment.

Principles of fire behavior.

Techniques of fire and arson investigation.

Laws and ordinances pertaining to fire prevention, the Uniform Fire Code, and the Uniform Building Code.

Safe work practices and procedures.

Public relations as they relate to obtaining cooperation and compliance to fire codes and laws.

Computers and software application programs.

Ability to:
Conduct fire inspection and code enforcement work.

Respond to inquiries, complaints and requests for service in a fair, tactful and firm manner.

Speak publicly and give presentations.

Deal effectively with property owners, managers and the general public in difficult work situations.

Detect fire hazards and make recommendations for their correction.

Give instructions on ways to prevent and eliminate fire hazards.

Conduct preliminary fact-finding inspections and investigations, including evidence gathering.

Properly interpret and make decisions in accordance with laws, regulations and policies.

Observe and record findings during inspections.

Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing; communicate with the general public and the news media in such a way as to be easily understandable to them.

Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with those contacted in the course of work and perform work with a customer service orientation.

Perform basic mathematical calculations and read blueprints or building plans.

Handle many different tasks in a short amount of time.

Experience and Training Guidelines

Any combination of experience and training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Experience:

Five years experience as a deputy fire marshal at the city of Vancouver.

Training:

Equivalent to the completion of the twelfth grade supplemented by specialized training in fire science, fire prevention, fire investigation, or a related field.

License or Certificate

Possession of an appropriate valid driver's license.

Meet NFPA 1031, step III, standard for Fire Prevention as defined in the Senior Fire Prevention Officer step program.

Meet NFPA 1033, step III, standard for Fire Investigator Prevention as defined in the Senior Fire Prevention Officer step program.

Meet NFPA 1035, step I, standard for Fire Public Educator as defined in the Senior Fire Prevention Officer step program.

Possession of a Uniform Fire Code Certification from the International Fire Code Institute.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Travel from site to site in residential or commercial environment; conduct inspections in potentially hazardous buildings and at fire sites; may be on-call 24 hours per day for emergencies, investigations, and inspections; frequent evening work to attend various meetings; considerable amount of driving is required.

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Rev. 6/98 dw

INFORMATION:

Contacts: Ron Myers presumptive disease lawyer in Seattle 360.459.5600 who was active in the legislation process to get it passed

Keven Rojecki: Tacoma city counsel position # 6

Look for any training that is liken:

- part of EVAP
- part of respiratory training
- Adventist wellness testing
- Federal money for In the line of duty death

get copy of firefighter's presumptive disease law then mirror for DFM