

# SF To Study Alarming Breast Cancer Rates For Women Firefighters

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A San Francisco Fire Department truck on the scene of a fire. (CBS)

SAN FRANCISCO (KCBS) — San Francisco's female firefighters, exposed to carcinogens and other chemicals while on the job, are disproportionately diagnosed for breast cancer. Now, the city is hoping to conduct the first study in the nation to find out why.

Following court ordered diversity, San Francisco city began hiring women firefighters in the late 1980's. Today, the city has the largest population of the female fighters in the U.S., as well as a high rate of breast cancer among 40 to 50-year-old women.

Of the 117 female firefighters, 11 have been diagnosed with breast cancer and 1 had died. That is six times the normal rate. Tony Stefani, a retired San Francisco Fire Department captain and the president of the SF Firefighters Cancer Prevention Foundation, said the city is hoping to conduct the first study on the health of woman firefighters.

"Through this study we'll able to see the kinds of chemicals that are being retained in the blood of our fire fighters and try to work out ways that we can hopefully reduced the exposures that firefighters are receiving on a daily basis," he said.

The study, Stefani said, will both benefit women and men.

Stefani's foundation has applied for a grant to help pay for the study, and already has some of the money it needs from a firemen's fund insurance company donation.

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