

House Bill 204

WORKERS' COMPENSATION DISABILITY FOR FIREFIGHTERS



HB 204: Introduction



Firefighting is an inherently dangerous job.

It is important that workers compensation insurance provides coverage for the inherent risks in that job.

Currently, there is an oversight in Alaska Statutes regarding that coverage: Breast Cancer.

Breast Cancer Risk - Firefighters



Key Facts:

- ▶ Male firefighters are 7.5 times more likely to die from breast cancer than their counterparts not in fire service (Ma et al, 2005)
- ▶ Studies that have evaluated cancer risk among women firefighters suggest they may be at an elevated incidence of risk for breast cancer (Daniels et al, 2014).
- ▶ Women in the U.S. have a 1 in 8 (12 %) lifetime risk of contracting breast cancer.



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HB 204 would add breast cancer to the list of presumed disability coverages for firefighters, so long as the firefighter could establish that the firefighter was exposed to a known carcinogen associated with breast cancer



Alaska Statute 23.30.121



Breast Cancer would join the existing list of diseases alongside:

1. Respiratory Disease
2. Cardiovascular Events (Limited)
3. Primary Brain Cancer
4. Malignant Melanoma
5. Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
6. Bladder Cancer
7. Ureter Cancer
8. Kidney Cancer
9. Prostate Cancer

Alaska Statute 23.30.121



Several standard limitations apply for presumption of compensability. The firefighter must:

1. Have been a firefighter for at least seven years,
2. Have had initial and annual medical exams showing no evidence of disease,
3. Be able to demonstrate exposure to a known carcinogen while in the Fire Service,
4. At a minimum, be certified as a Firefighter I.

Alaska Statute 23.30.121

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Other qualifying criteria would apply, including:

1. Coverage may be denied based on:
 - a. Use of tobacco products,
 - b. Physical fitness and weight,
 - c. Lifestyle decisions,
 - d. Hereditary factors, and
 - e. Exposure from other employment/non-employment activities.
2. Post-employment coverage is available:
 - a. Three months accrued for every year of service
 - b. Five-year maximum.

Senate Bill 131



Fourteen states include breast cancer in presumptive laws:

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|-------------|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Arizona | 6. Maine | 11. New York |
| 2. Arkansas | 7. Maryland | 12. Oregon |
| 3. Colorado | 8. Missouri | 13. Virginia |
| 4. Idaho | 9. Montana | 14. Wisconsin |
| 5. Iowa | 10. New Mexico | 15. <i>(Alaska?)</i> |

Questions?

