

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senate Bill 131

Workers' Compensation Disability for Firefighters

SPONSOR STATEMENT

Firefighting is an inherently dangerous job, resulting in instances of cancer in firefighters is shown to be higher than the general population. Studies that have evaluated cancer risk among women firefighters suggest women firefighters, like their male coworkers, may be at an elevated risk for overall cancer incidence (Daniels et al., 2014). These studies also suggest women firefighters may be at an elevated incidence risk for breast cancer (Daniels et al., 2014).

In addition to studies on cancer risk among firefighters, a small but growing body of research examines firefighters' exposures to toxic chemicals, including carcinogens and hormone disruptors, on the fire ground, in stations, and from their gear.

Exposure to carcinogenic chemicals and hormone-disrupting chemicals do not discriminate based on sex or gender. Exposure to these chemicals may be mitigated, but not eliminated, through protective equipment, firehouse design, and structural changes. Firefighters involved in fire suppression, whether it be as a volunteer or career firefighter, are at higher risk of cancer.

SB 131 would help recognize this additional risk firefighters take to keep us safe. Thank you for your consideration of the addition of breast cancer to the list of presumed disability coverages for firefighters.