



IN BRIEF



Heat Stress

In Darwin, Aviation Branch members have been participating in trials to combat heat stress during protracted incidents. Six firefighters were part of a larger team that tested the impact of four cooling methods on core body temperatures.



pic: stockxpert.com

Big 3

In the USA, the three top killers of firefighters are fire scene risk management failures, heart disease and emergency driving accidents. These specific threats to firefighter survival, health and safety are the "Big Three" says the IAFF.



pic: stock.xchng

Snakes alive!

Queanbeyan firefighters are being trained to deal with snakes. The town's firefighters have been receiving regular requests to remove snakes that are sighted around houses during the warmer months.

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Exposure to carcinogens is an occupational hazard for firefighters – the Union's sights are set on presumptive protection. pic: stock.xchng

More to it

The campaign for presumptive recognition of firefighter cancers continues but challenges remain in Australia and North America

Last year, a cluster of firefighter cancers in Far North Queensland prompted a state-wide study of cancer in firefighters. "At Atherton, three firefighters suffered brain cancers or tumours," says UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall. "Sadly, for one Member, their illness proved fatal,"

The study, conducted by a Monash University research team, was released recently; it found no evidence of higher cancer rates for firefighters. "We are concerned about the findings and treat the conclusions with some caution," says Peter Marshall. "Queensland firefighters aren't great

in number, so this makes for a relatively small sample size. Studies in the USA show firefighters are three times more likely to get cancer than other men."

The UFUA believes a national study of Australian firefighters will reveal more information. "The Union is campaigning for change to legislation and regulations across states and territories to automatically recognise cancers contracted by firefighters as being work related," says Peter Marshall. "This will mean firefighters won't have to fight long legal battles while they're battling their illness."

SMOKE SCREEN

A new study claiming there is not enough research data to link firefighting and a range of cancers has been condemned by North America's firefighter Union, the IAFF. The research was funded by the National League of Cities, a group that has lobbied vigorously in North America against presumptive legislation. The IAFF says the NLC deploys tobacco industry-style propaganda and that their report

is flawed. The League has fought every piece of presumptive legislation introduced in North America.

There is a compelling body of evidence of an epidemiological correlation between firefighting and cancer. This has been used by 28 US states and seven Canadian provinces to create presumptive laws to protect and support firefighters.