



Cranesville Volunteer Fire Department

167 Riverview Drive
Amsterdam, NY 12010
(518) 842-3520

Fax (518) 843-7453
firehouse@cranesvillefire.com



Cancer Prevention Policy

Purpose: To establish a policy, to the maximum extent possible, to prevent exposure to cancer causing toxins while performing the duties of the Cranesville Fire Department.

Background: Firefighting is a dangerous profession, and a growing body of research and data shows the contributions that job-related exposures have in the development of cancer. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recently undertook two large studies, (<https://firefightercancersupport.org/wpcontent/uploads/2013/10/NIOSH-Firefighter-Cancer-Study-w-Summary.pdf>) which focused on firefighter cancer and concluded that firefighters face a 9 percent increase in cancer diagnoses, and a 14 percent increase in cancer-related deaths, compared to the general population in the U.S. Latest statistics suggest that firefighters have a 63% increased risk of developing some form of cancer than the citizen population. Increased risk for firefighters compared with the general population is as follows:

- Testicular cancer (2.02 times greater risk)
- Multiple myeloma (1.53 times greater risk)
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (1.51 times greater risk)
- Skin cancer (1.39 times greater risk)
- Prostate cancer (1.28 times greater risk)
- Malignant melanoma (1.31 times greater risk)
- Brain cancer (1.31 times greater risk)
- Colon cancer (1.21 times greater risk)
- Leukemia (1.14 times greater risk)

Some of the more hazardous carcinogens are Benzene, Formaldehyde, PCB's, and Asbestos, among many others. Additionally, there are significant chemical hazards, such as Carbon Monoxide, Hydrogen Cyanide and Phosgene, just to name a few. The microscopic particles of incomplete combustion are heavily laden in the smoke of all types of fire to which we respond. These known cancer-causing toxins are present in structure fires, car fires, dumpster fires, wildland fires and smoke from any fire in general. The risk of absorbing these chemicals through



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the skin has been shown to occur, even though firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE). Chemical / carcinogen absorption increases as the body temperature increases from physical exertion. Skin becomes 400% more absorptive for every 5 degrees increase in core body temperature. In general, body temperature increases between 3-5 degrees while performing firefighting activities. The body takes approximately 30-50 minutes to return to normal temperature after firefighting. Additionally, PPE off gasses vapors of the chemicals found in smoke well beyond extinguishment of the fire.

In-Station Guidance: The following guidance shall be followed, to the maximum extend that is practical, while performing the duties of the Cranesville Fire Department working in and around the station.

Use latex gloves when handling any contaminated equipment or PPE.

- Ensure that PPE is laundered and dried as soon as possible after exposure to carcinogens.
- Shower thoroughly after exposure to products of combustion.
- Change to a clean uniform and wash contaminated uniform immediately, and separate from other laundry, after a fire.
- Do not take contaminated PPE or station uniforms home or store in lockers or vehicles.
- Decontaminate apparatus interior immediately after a fire.
- Open all bay doors or use the station vehicle exhaust ventilation system when apparatus is entering or exiting the station to facilitate diesel exhaust removal.
- Perform vehicle and equipment checks outside of the station; including running of small equipment.
- No vehicle idling in the apparatus bay.
- Keep turnout gear out of hall, kitchen, and office spaces.
- Keep doors between apparatus floor and living spaces closed and limit traffic through these doors as much as possible.
- Wear work or latex gloves when possible and wash hands frequently.

On-Scene Guidance: The following guidance shall be followed, to the maximum extend that is practical, while performing the duties of the Cranesville Fire Department during “On-Scene” operations.



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- Always wear full PPE during firefighting activities.
- Use Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) from the initial attack until completion of the investigation. Don SCBA mask and go on air prior to entering smoke / hazard zone.
- Recognize the need for decontamination.
- Utilize positive pressure decontamination upon exiting an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) environment.
- Upon leaving IDLH /smoke atmosphere, do not remove PPE until gross decontamination is completed.
- Perform gross field decontamination of PPE with water and Blue Dawn dish detergent soap to remove any potential carcinogens.
- Utilize hand wipes to remove products of combustion from the head, neck, jaw, throat, underarms and hands immediately while on scene.
- Use nitrile exam type gloves for cleaning equipment.
- Rinse all hose, tools, equipment, and SCBA's with water and dish detergent soap before placing back on the apparatus.
- During days where the possibility of high UV radiation exposure will be possible, the use of portable shade such as pop up type canopies, the county rehab bus, or other types of shade shall be considered.

PPE Doffing Guidance: The following guidance shall be followed, to the maximum extent that is practical, while doffing PPE after being exposed to a potentially hazardous environment.

- Remove structural gloves and use Nitrile type gloves for remainder of doffing.
- Remove helmet.
- Remove SCBA mask.
- Remove hood quickly to reduce spreading contaminants on face and neck.
- Remove SCBA.
- Remove turnout coat.
- Use wipes to clean neck, face, hands & groin.
- Remove bunker pants and boots.
- Clean inside helmet with wipes.



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- Place all gear in a plastic bag for storage and washing.

General Guidance for everyday tasks: The following guidance shall be followed, to the maximum extent that is practical, while performing general everyday tasks at the Cranesville Fire Department where outdoor work or recreational activities are required and there is a risk of UV exposure.

- The use of sunscreen of SPF 15 or greater shall be encouraged to all exposed skin with particular attention placed to the neck, skin, and face areas.
- The wearing of Long sleeve shirts with long pants shall be encouraged. The wearing hats and sunglasses shall also be encouraged.
- During days where the possibility of high UV radiation exposure will be possible and outdoor exposure cannot be limited, the consideration for providing members and the public with portable shade shall be considered.
- Members of the Cranesville Fire Department shall also communicate this guidance to members of the public that may be at the station or otherwise participating in fire department activities.

Cranesville Fire Department Responsibilities: The Cranesville Fire Department shall be responsible for the following.

- Verbally communicate the above policy during times of expected exposure from toxic substances or UV exposure would be of significant concern.
- Provide all members with access to sunscreen.
- Provide and on-scene decontamination kit where appropriate.
- Review above policy annually and provide membership with any updates to this policy.