

Firefighter Presumptions

If you are or have been a firefighter and have one of the primary-site cancers listed below, the cancer may be presumed to be an occupational disease and you may be eligible for WCB benefits.

Presumptions apply to all firefighters

The disease will be presumed to be an occupational disease predominantly caused by the firefighter’s service or employment if a full-time, part-time or volunteer firefighter:

- Suffers from a disease listed below.
- Is currently serving or employed, or has served or been employed, with a fire department for a specified minimum period, and
- Is or has been exposed to the hazards of a fire scene, other than a forest fire, during their service or employment as a firefighter.

Diseases covered by the presumptions

The following occupational diseases are presumed to be compensable if the firefighter meets the prescribed minimum period of service for a volunteer firefighter or employment for a full-time or part-time firefighter:

Occupational disease	Period of service or employment (cumulative)
Brain cancer	10 years
Bladder cancer	15 years
Kidney cancer	20 years
Primary non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma	20 years
Leukemia	5 years
Ureter cancer	15 years
Colorectal cancer	15 years
Lung cancer (non-smoking firefighters)	15 years
Testicular cancer	10 years
Esophageal cancer	25 years
Prostate cancer	15 years
Skin cancer	15 years
Multiple myeloma	15 years
Breast cancer	10 years
Cervical cancer	10 years
Ovarian cancer	10 years
Cardiac injury	n/a

This information is clarified through WCB policy, Injuries – Firefighters (POL 03/2020).



Factors considered in case of a cardiac injury

If a firefighter suffers a cardiac injury within 24 hours after attendance at an emergency response scene, it is presumed to be an occupational disease unless the contrary is shown, and no minimum period of employment will be required.

Firefighter's history of smoking in cases of lung cancer

For primary-site lung cancer to be presumed an occupational disease, the firefighter must be a non-smoker for a minimum period before the diagnosis.

Average consumption	Period of non-smoking
Less than 7 cigarettes per week	6 years
1 to 9 cigarettes per day	6 years
10 to 19 cigarettes per day	13 years
20 cigarettes per day	18 years
21 to 39 cigarettes per day	23 years
40 or more cigarettes per day	28 years
1 or more cigars and/or pipes per day	8 years

If the minimum non-smoking period is not met, the presumptions will not apply and the disease will be considered under WCB policy, Injuries – Occupational Disease (POL 04/2017).

There will be no minimum period of non-smoking if a firefighter has smoked in their lifetime:

- a. Less than 365 cigarettes, cigars and/or pipes, or
- b. On average less than seven cigars or pipes per week.

If a firefighter smoked cigarettes in combination with cigars and/or pipes, the minimum period will be determined in accordance with the above table. One cigar or pipe will be considered as one cigarette.

Where smoking is a factor in an accepted work-related lung cancer claim, cost relief may be provided to the employer under WCB policy, Second Injury and Re-Employment Reserve (POL 11/2017).

Previously denied claims

If a listed occupational disease for a firefighter was previously denied under former legislation, the firefighter (or dependants) can request the WCB reconsider the original decision. The request to reconsider previous claims will be considered by the WCB team responsible for the most recent decision, before progressing to the next level of appeal.