



Virginia Professional Fire Fighters 2025 Legislative Agenda

SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF FALLEN PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS

The VPPF urges the Virginia General Assembly to pass legislation to expand Line of Duty benefits for fire fighters whose death or disability is caused by occupational cancer under the Virginia Line of Duty Act (LODA).

BACKGROUND

In 2023, 72% of all fire fighter line of duty deaths resulted from occupational cancer. Due to occupational exposures to carcinogens, fire fighters have a 9% higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14% higher risk of dying from cancer than the general population. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has recognized working as a fire fighter to be a Group 1 “Carcinogenic Exposure,” the same level as tobacco smoking or unprotected exposure to radiation.

In 2022, the General Assembly passed legislation [§SB562/HB1042] expanding coverage for occupational cancer under the Virginia Workers’ Compensation Act (VWCA) from 5 years to 10 years post-exposure but failed to equally expand coverage for occupational cancer under the Virginia Line of Duty Act, which remains at only 5 years. This fails to recognize that latency periods vary by type of cancer or factor in the formation of a tumor being a complex process.

NEEDED ACTION

This legislation is technical in nature and aligns the period of time to file a claim for benefits under the Virginia Line of Duty Act (LODA) for occupational cancer to the same period of time under the Virginia Workers Compensation Act (VWCA).

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