



# CONNECTICUT STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### **The Basics of Wage Replacement Benefits for Connecticut Firefighters with Cancer**

#### **1. Who can file a claim for relief under this new law?**

Any Connecticut firefighter, whether paid or volunteer is eligible. The act specifically says that "firefighter" shall also include: any local fire marshal, deputy fire marshal, fire investigator, fire inspector and other classes of inspectors and investigators described in the Connecticut General Statutes section 29-298 which can be found on the following web link ([http://www.sots.ct.gov/sots/lib/sots/regulations/title\\_29/298.pdf](http://www.sots.ct.gov/sots/lib/sots/regulations/title_29/298.pdf)).

#### **2. What is the purpose of the "firefighter's cancer relief account" that was established by the passage of this new law and who makes determinations on claims?**

The moneys in the firefighters cancer relief account shall be used solely for the purposes of providing wage replacement benefits for up to 2 years to firefighters who are diagnosed with a condition of cancer. A panel of Fire Service representatives and one representative for state municipalities determines acceptance or denial of all claims.

#### **3. What forms of cancer are covered by the new law?**

A firefighter shall be eligible for wage replacement benefits for any condition of cancer affecting the brain, skin, skeletal system, digestive system, endocrine system, respiratory system, lymphatic system, reproductive system, urinary system or hematological system that results in death, or temporary or permanent total or partial disability.

#### **4. Are there special conditions or criteria that must be met for any firefighter with one of the covered cancers to file and collect wage replacement benefits?**

Yes, there are several criteria that must be met. Every Connecticut firefighter should be aware of all of these conditions immediately. Failure to meet these conditions may result in a firefighter's failure to qualify for wage replacement benefits. The required special conditions are as follows:

- Such firefighter successfully passed a physical examination upon entry into such service showing no indication of cancer.
- Such firefighter has not used any cigarettes or any other tobacco products within 15 years of applying for wage replacement benefits.

- Such firefighter has worked for not less than five years on or after the effective date of this section as:
  - an interior structural firefighter at a paid municipal, state or volunteer fire department
  - a local fire marshal, deputy fire marshal, fire investigator, or fire inspector at the time such cancer is discovered, or should have been discovered.
- Such firefighter has complied with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act standards described in 29 CFR 1910.134 and in 29 CFR 1910.156 for a period of not less than five consecutive years. (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134 can be found on the following link: ([https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=STANDARDS&p\\_id=9810](https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9810)). OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134 can be found on the following link: [https://www.osha.gov/dte/library/respirators/major\\_requirements.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/dte/library/respirators/major_requirements.pdf))

**5. Can someone who is no longer actively serving as a firefighter collect wage replacement benefits under this new law?**

Yes, the new law says that any individual who is no longer actively serving as a firefighter but who otherwise would be eligible for wage replacement benefits may apply for such benefits not more than five years from the date such individual last served as a firefighter.

**6. Is there a requirement for physical examinations if someone wishes to file a cancer claim?**

Yes, a firefighter or individual applying for wage replacement benefits shall be required to submit to annual physical examinations, including blood testing, during his or her active service and for a period of five years after the date such individual last served as a firefighter as a condition of receiving such benefits.

**7. When can someone file a cancer claim for wage replacement benefits under this new law?**

This new law becomes effective February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The effective date for a firefighter to be eligible to file a cancer claim for wage replacement benefits is July 1, 2019. Firefighter must have worked a minimum of 5 years and must not be more than 5 years retired.

**8. How do these wage replacement benefits affect my employer and other benefits and claims?**

Employers must still maintain health and welfare benefits while a firefighter receives benefits from the firefighter's cancer relief account. Firefighters may still file a Worker's Compensation claim but cannot file for both simultaneously. Documentation will be required, e.g., presence at structure fire, activities completed, record of duration and exposure to the products of combustion, heat, etc. as defined by the International Agency on the Research on Cancer.