

SKIN CANCER AND FIREFIGHTERS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

DID YOU KNOW?

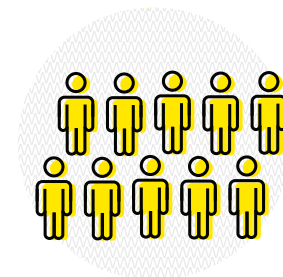
SKIN CANCER IS THE MOST COMMONLY DIAGNOSED CANCER IN SASKATCHEWAN. IT IS ALSO THE MOST PREVENTABLE.

SASKATCHEWAN GETS THE MOST SUN OUT OF ANY CANADIAN PROVINCE.

Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR) exposure from the sun causes damage to the skin and eyes and increases your risk of skin cancer.

SKIN CANCER, INCLUDING THE MOST DANGEROUS FORM CALLED MELANOMA, IS TREATABLE WHEN DETECTED EARLY.

Each year, approximately 3300 new cases of non-melanoma skin cancer and 190 cases of melanoma are diagnosed in this province.



Approximately
10 PEOPLE

are diagnosed with a new skin cancer in Saskatchewan every day.

AS A FIREFIGHTER, YOU FACE EXPOSURES ON THE JOB THAT PUT YOU AT RISK FOR SKIN CANCER.

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) are a class of over 100 chemicals produced when substances like wood, coal, gas, garbage and other organic substances are incompletely burned. Some of these chemicals are known to cause cancer - they're classified as carcinogens. Many others are classified as probable or possible carcinogens.

Inhalation of smoke-derived organic compounds, including PAHs, *is not the main concern* for firefighters because your self-contained breathing apparatus protects you well.

The main concern for firefighters is when PAHs come in contact with your skin. This is called dermal contact or dermal exposure.

PAHs can be found on and under your gear and absorbed through your skin in the hours after exposure. This is called transdermal absorption.

PAHS EXPOSURE IS LINKED TO SKIN CANCER.



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FIGHT SKIN CANCER **ON AND OFF THE JOB**

Reduce absorption of PAHs through your skin on the job.

- Remove your gear, decontaminate it and store it properly.
- Shower and wash your skin thoroughly with soap as soon as possible after every fire response. Washing off immediately can dramatically reduce the amount of particulate matter on your skin and the opportunity for absorption of PAHs.
- If it's not possible to shower immediately, clean your skin as well as you can. Wash your hands with soap and water if available and use hand sanitizer if not. Use disposable wet wipes for your face, neck and other areas of exposed skin.



Protect your skin from sun exposure off the job. Sun exposure is by far the most significant risk factor for skin cancer.

- **Check the UV Index.** Protect your skin whenever the UV Index is 3 or higher – in Saskatchewan that's generally from 11am to 3pm between April and September, even when it's cloudy.
- **Cover up with clothing.** Clothing is the first line of defense against the sun.
- **Wear a hat with a wide brim** that shades your face, head, ears, and neck.
- **Use sunscreen** labelled broad spectrum, water-resistant and at least SPF 30. Apply generously to all areas not covered by clothing.
- **Seek shade** or bring your own umbrella.
- **Wear sunglasses** with full UVR protection to protect your eyes. Close-fitting wrap around styles are best.



Ask your doctor to check your skin for skin cancer.

Early detection of a Melanoma skin cancer can save your life!

- **Know your skin.** Check your skin monthly and keep an eye on the moles that you have. If you see a mole or spot on your skin that is changing, itching, bleeding or growing, see your doctor right away.
- **Ask your doctor for a skin check** at your annual physical. Tell your doctor you're at an increased risk because you're a firefighter.

Learn more:

www.sunsmartsk.ca