

The Edmonton Story



Fire Chief Ken G. Block

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services



Occupational Cancer in firefighters in the Nordic countries

Fire Chief Ken G. Block

Edmonton Fire Rescue Services

Career highlights include:

- Appointed City of Edmonton's Fire Chief February 1, 2009
- 30+ years firefighter

Executive Board Member, President:

- Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association*
 - * section of International Association of Fire Chiefs
 - * section of National Fire Protection Association

Board Member:

- Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Canadian Metro Chiefs Representative
- **Presidential Advisor**, Alberta Fire Chiefs Association Board of Directors
- **President**, Edmonton Firefighter's Union 2001- 2007 (three terms)



Occupational Cancer in firefighters in the Nordic countries

Hello



Hej



Hei



Hallo



Halló



Occupational Cancer in firefighters in the Nordic countries

- Introduction to Edmonton, Alberta

- Overview of the City and Edmonton Fire Rescue Services

- Alberta's journey to presumptive coverage for firefighters

- After the legislation: Opportunities

- Prevention, Continuous Improvement, Effects

- After the legislation: Cost Impacts

- Ten years of historical costs associated with presumptive cancer legislation claims



Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Edmonton Quick Facts:

- Area of Coverage: 701 km² (271 square miles)
- City Population: 877,926 (2014, Municipal Census)
- Metro Population: 1,328,300 (2014, Statistics Canada)

Economy:

- GDP of \$89.1 billion (2014)
- GDP growth of 3.9% (2014, Canadian growth of 2.5%)
- Edmonton's economy revolves around the oil, gas and energy industry sectors

Did you know?

- Edmonton's river valley parkland is one of the longest stretches in a North American urban area at 7,400 hectares
- Edmonton has a northern mid-latitude climate with very long summer days (up to 17 hours) and about 2,300 hours of sunlight per year

2014 Fire Rescue Services delivered to our community:

Total Dispatched Events: 42,180

Medical Response Events: 27,276

Rescue Response Events: 9,999

Fire Suppression Response Events: 3,225

Hazardous Materials Response Events: 1,680

With:

1,200 Full Time Equivalent positions

27 Active Fire Stations

27 Pumper, 9 Ladder, 6 Rescue, 5 Tanker trucks in service

Fire Prevention and Fire Investigation Units

Training Academy and Practical Training Facility

Emergency Response Communications Dispatch Centre

Emergency Operations Centre



Edmonton: Collaborative Labour Management Relations



- A shared vision and goals that are mutually beneficial
- Utilize political action for common objectives
- I.A.F.F. is a resource and an asset !
- Unified and consistent messaging
- Communication is key



Alberta's journey: Timeline

2001



- A new union executive board - January, 2001



- A new Fire Chief - September, 2001



Alberta's journey: Timeline

September 11, 2001



IN MEMORY OF



Our Fallen Brothers.

Alberta's journey: Timeline

Presumptive cancer legislation in Alberta



- Alberta regulation 102/2003 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*, 'Firefighters' primary site cancer regulation' sets out the rules where firefighters can receive compensation for presumptive cancers. The Regulation was first made in 2003.

- The impetus to creating presumptive cancer coverage for Alberta's firefighters was to protect firefighters who regularly expose themselves to hazardous environments while protecting the public.

- Alberta, along with Manitoba, has the most comprehensive list of presumptive cancers for firefighters in all of Canada.

- In 2011, Alberta added four new cancers to the list of presumptive cancers, bringing the total to fourteen. Also in 2011, Alberta extended coverage to include volunteer/casual/part-time firefighters in addition to full-time firefighters.

Firefighters with cancer

If you are or have been a firefighter and have one of the primary site cancers listed in the following chart, the cancer may be presumed to be an occupational disease and you may be eligible for WCB-Alberta benefits. The presumption applies to full time, volunteer, part-time and casual firefighters who have been regularly exposed to the hazards of a fire scene, other than a forest fire, for the minimum period shown for the specified cancer.

PRIMARY SITE CANCERS	MINIMUM PERIOD OF REGULAR EXPOSURE TO THE HAZARDS OF A FIRE SCENE
ADDED in 2003 – applies to claims with dates of accident* on or after April 1, 1978	
Primary leukemia	5 years
Primary site brain cancer	10 years
Primary site bladder cancer	15 years
Primary site ureter cancer	15 years
Primary site kidney cancer	20 years
Primary site colorectal cancer	20 years
A primary non-Hodgkin's lymphoma	20 years
ADDED in 2005 – applies to claims with dates of accident* on or after December 1, 1980	
Primary site lung cancer in non-smokers**	15 years
ADDED in 2010 – applies to claims with dates of accident* on or after May 1, 1985	
Primary site testicular cancer	20 years
Primary site esophageal cancer	25 years
ADDED in 2011 - applies to claims with dates of accident on or after May 1, 1986	
Primary site prostate cancer	15 years
Primary site skin cancer	15 years
Primary site breast cancer	10 years
Multiple myeloma	15 years

Alberta's journey: Timeline

2012



Changes under *Bill 1: The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act* allow first responders (including firefighters, police officers, sheriffs and paramedics) to receive compensation for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) without having to prove their condition is work-related. Alberta was the first province in Canada to provide such coverage.



“There is increased awareness of the affects of PTSD over the last decade. This legislation recognizes first responders who face traumatic experiences. We are proud to support them and bring forward legislation that leads the country.”

Dave Hancock,
Minister of Human Services



Fire Chiefs

Leading Change together
with the I.A.F.F.

Occupational Cancer in firefighters in the Nordic countries

2009 Metro Chiefs Conference - Recap of the TriData study conversation

- Study assessed cancer presumption laws and firefighter cancer research



2012 Urban Fire Forum



■ Topics:

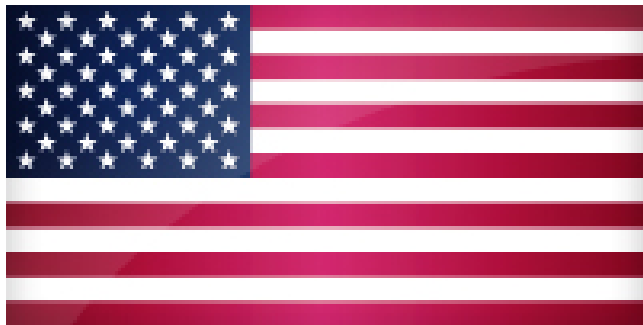
- Presumptive cancer and related health issues
- Disaster planning
- Fire-based EMS

■ Deliverables:

- To raise awareness of presumptive legislation
- Continue to work closely with the I.A.F.F.

Fire Chiefs need to know their jurisdiction's presumptive legislation

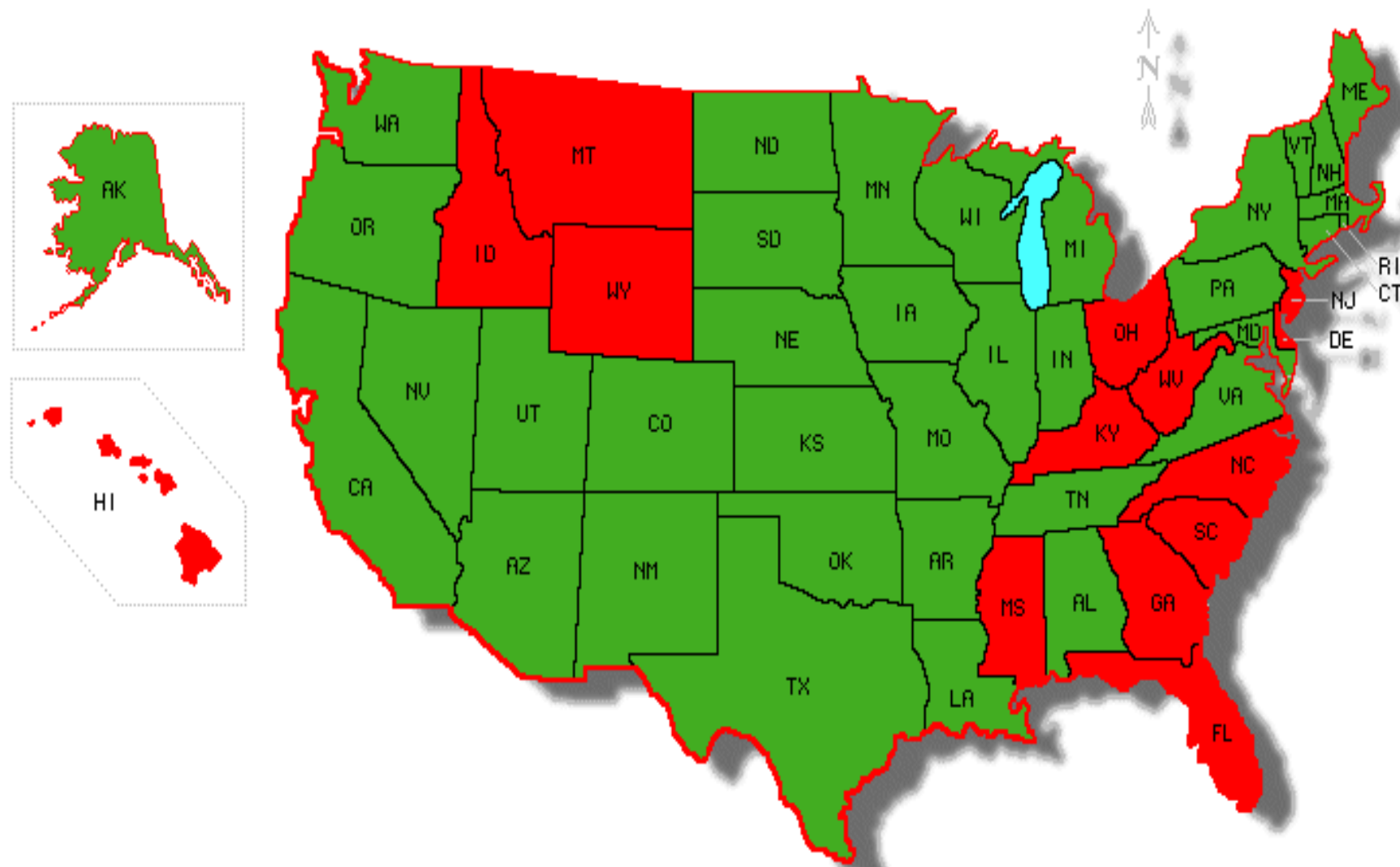
- There are currently 36 US states and 10 Canadian provinces/territories with presumption laws enacted for firefighters with cancer as an occupational illness



Firefighter Presumptive Cancer Legislation

● - LEGISLATION - YES

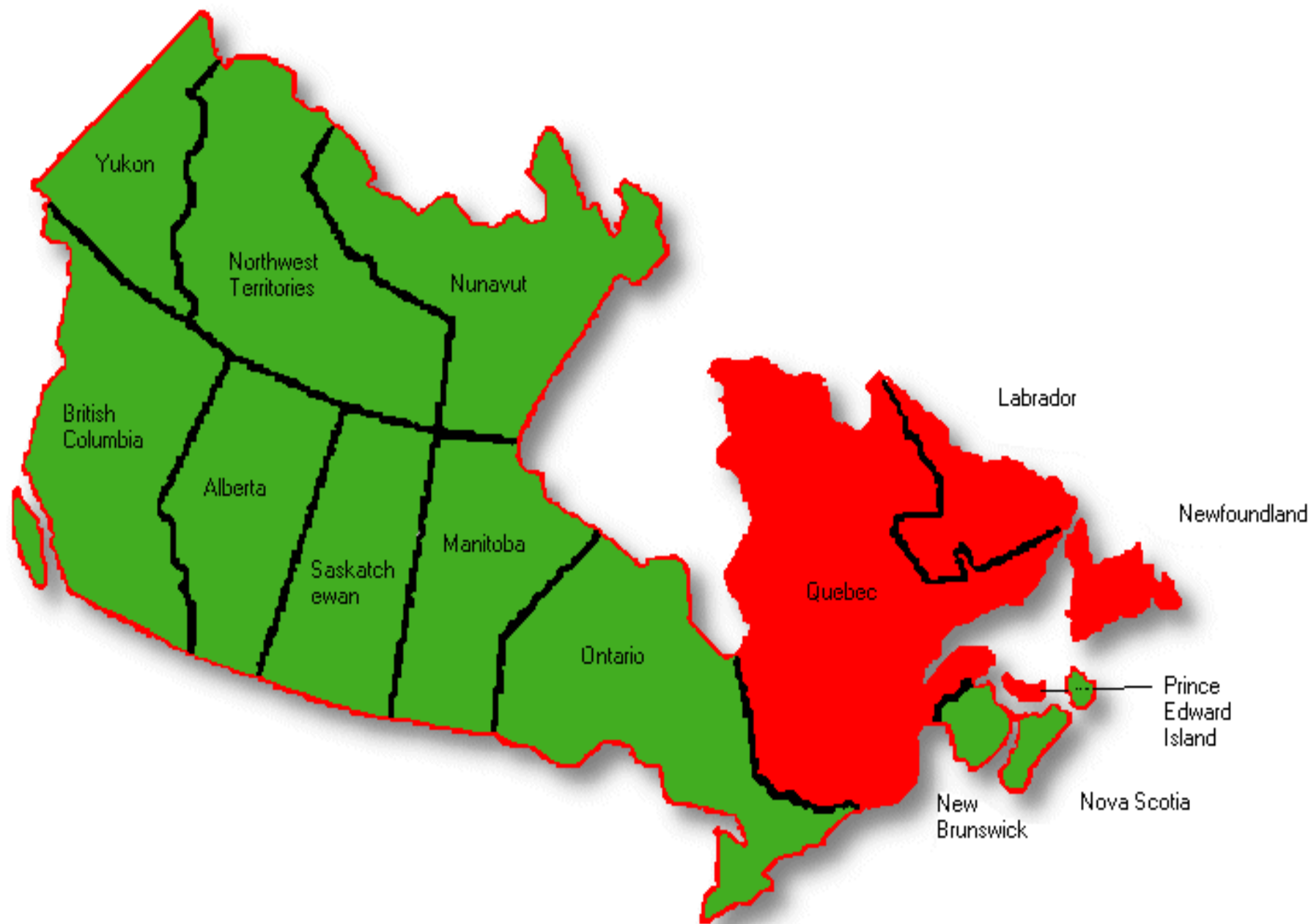
● - LEGISLATION - NO



Firefighter Presumptive Cancer Legislation

● - LEGISLATION - YES

● - LEGISLATION - NO





After the legislation:

- Opportunities

After the legislation: Prevention

Opportunities:

- Health and Wellness programming
 - Medicals and baseline testing
 - Early stage pre-screening of serious medical issues
 - Early detection of occupational cancers
 - Physical fitness programming
 - Mental health



After the legislation: Prevention

Opportunities:

- Decontamination

- Following NFPA 1500 standards
- Understanding the science and off gassing effects
- Utilizing bunker gear storage rooms
- Personal Protective Equipment



After the legislation: Continuous improvement

Opportunities:

- Science and Research

- ☐ New Studies available
- ☐ Legislative Improvements
- ☐ Educating Members and Medical Community



After the legislation: Effects

Opportunities:



■ Support

- ☐ Workers Compensation Board (WCB)
- ☐ Benefits
- ☐ Education and Awareness

After the legislation: Effects

Opportunities:

- Support

- Line of Duty Death



After the legislation: Effects

Opportunities:

■ Support

- ☐ Line of Duty Death protocol
- ☐ Emergency Ground
- ☐ Occupational Illnesses
- ☐ Elected Officials
- ☐ City Manager



After the legislation: Effects

Opportunities:

- Support

- Firefighters Memorial - Edmonton



After the legislation: Effects

Opportunities:

- Support

- Canadian Fallen Firefighters Memorial - Ottawa



After the legislation: Effects

Opportunities:

- Support

- IAFF Firefighters Memorial - Colorado Springs



After the legislation: Effects

Opportunities:

- Support groups - Who is affected?

- ☐ Family members
- ☐ Fellow firefighters
- ☐ Fire Administrations
- ☐ Union Executive





After the legislation:

- Cost Impacts



After the legislation: Cost Impacts

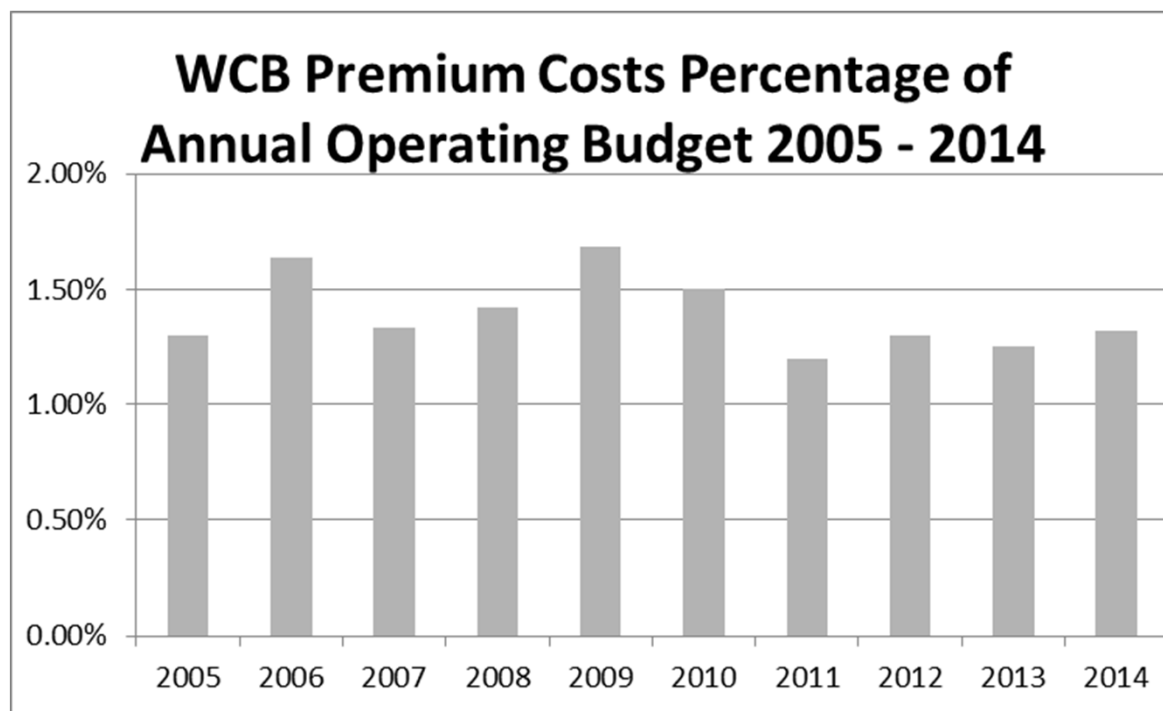
Cost impacts of presumptive cancer legislation

- In Alberta, there are approximately 14,500 firefighters; 4,000 are full-time firefighters and 10,500 are volunteer/casual/part-time firefighters.
- Alberta uses a premium based costing system for long-term disability claims.
- Over the ten year timeframe between 2005 and 2014, the average Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Alberta premium allocation of Edmonton Fire Rescue Services annual operating budget has been 1.40%. The allocation in 2005 was 1.30%. The allocation in 2014 was 1.32%.
- There was an initial insignificant costing increase over the first few years following presumptive cancer legislation. Since 2006, costs have stabilized and WCB premium cost increases can be correlated to staffing and wage increases.
- We have not experienced an inflationary factor for WCB costs.

After the legislation: Cost Impacts

Cost impacts of presumptive cancer legislation

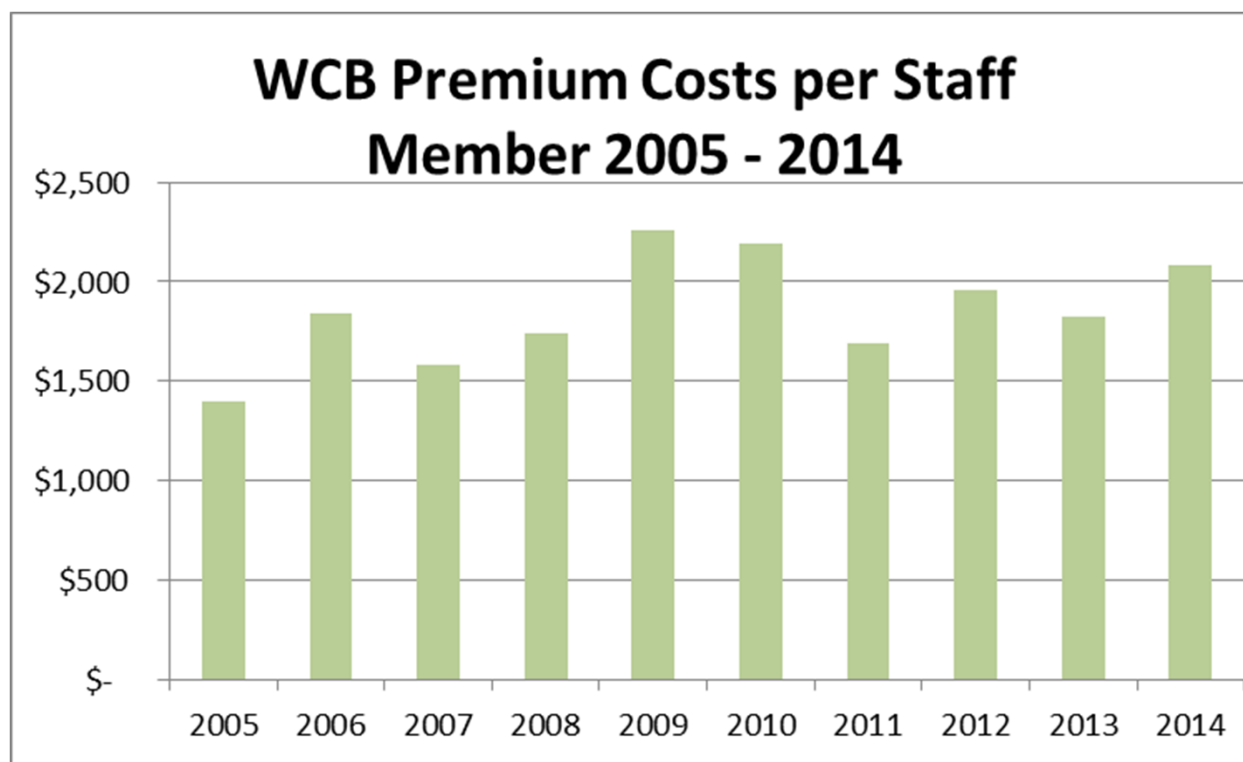
- Over the ten year timeframe between 2005 and 2014, the average Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Alberta premium allocation of Edmonton Fire Rescue Services annual operating budget has been 1.40%. The allocation in 2005 was 1.30%. The allocation in 2014 was 1.32%.



After the legislation: Cost Impacts

Cost impacts of presumptive cancer legislation

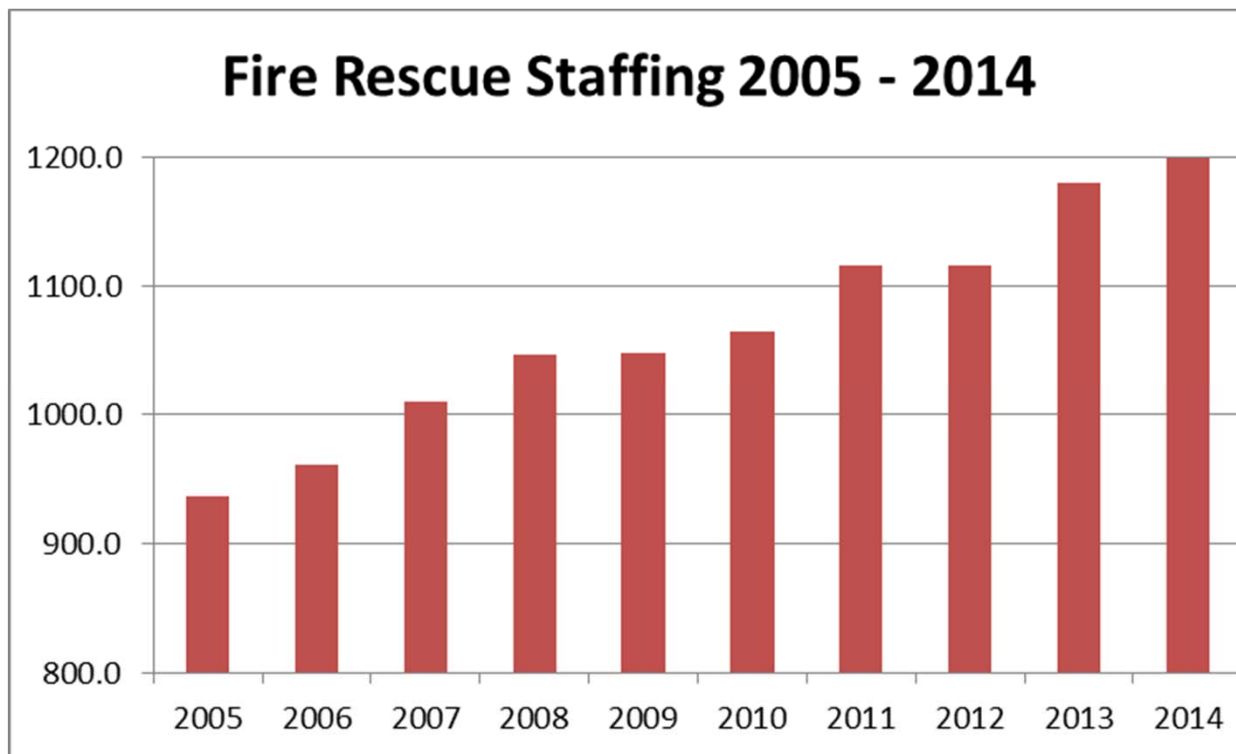
- Over the ten year timeframe between 2005 and 2014, the WCB premium costs per staff member peaked during the years 2009 and 2010. We have not experienced an inflationary factor for long term disability costs.



After the legislation: Cost Impacts

Cost impacts of presumptive cancer legislation

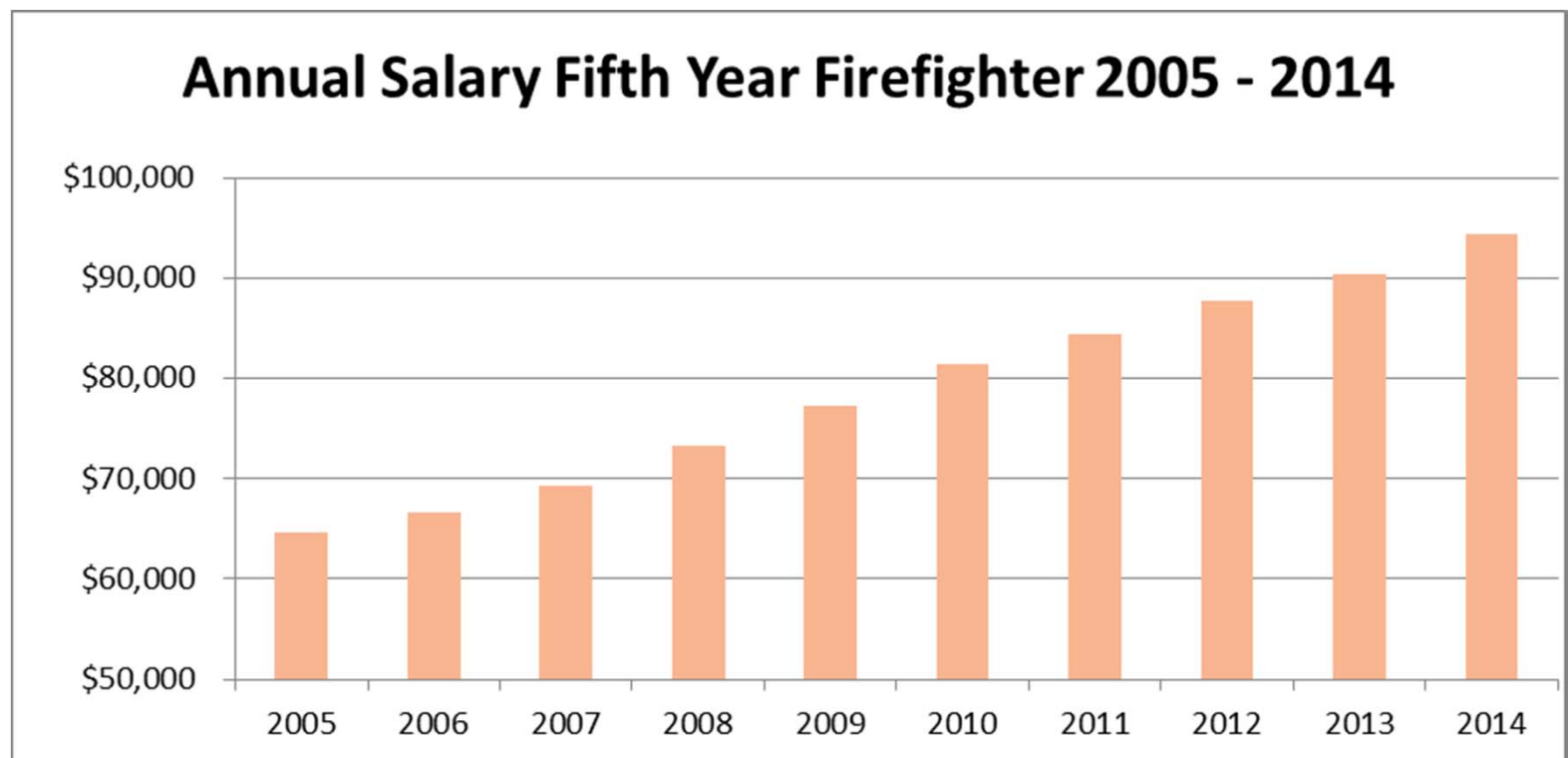
- Edmonton Fire Rescue's staffing levels increased by 28% from 2005 to 2014, which impacts the number of long term disability claims and increases the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Alberta premium costs.



After the legislation: Cost Impacts

Cost impacts of presumptive cancer legislation

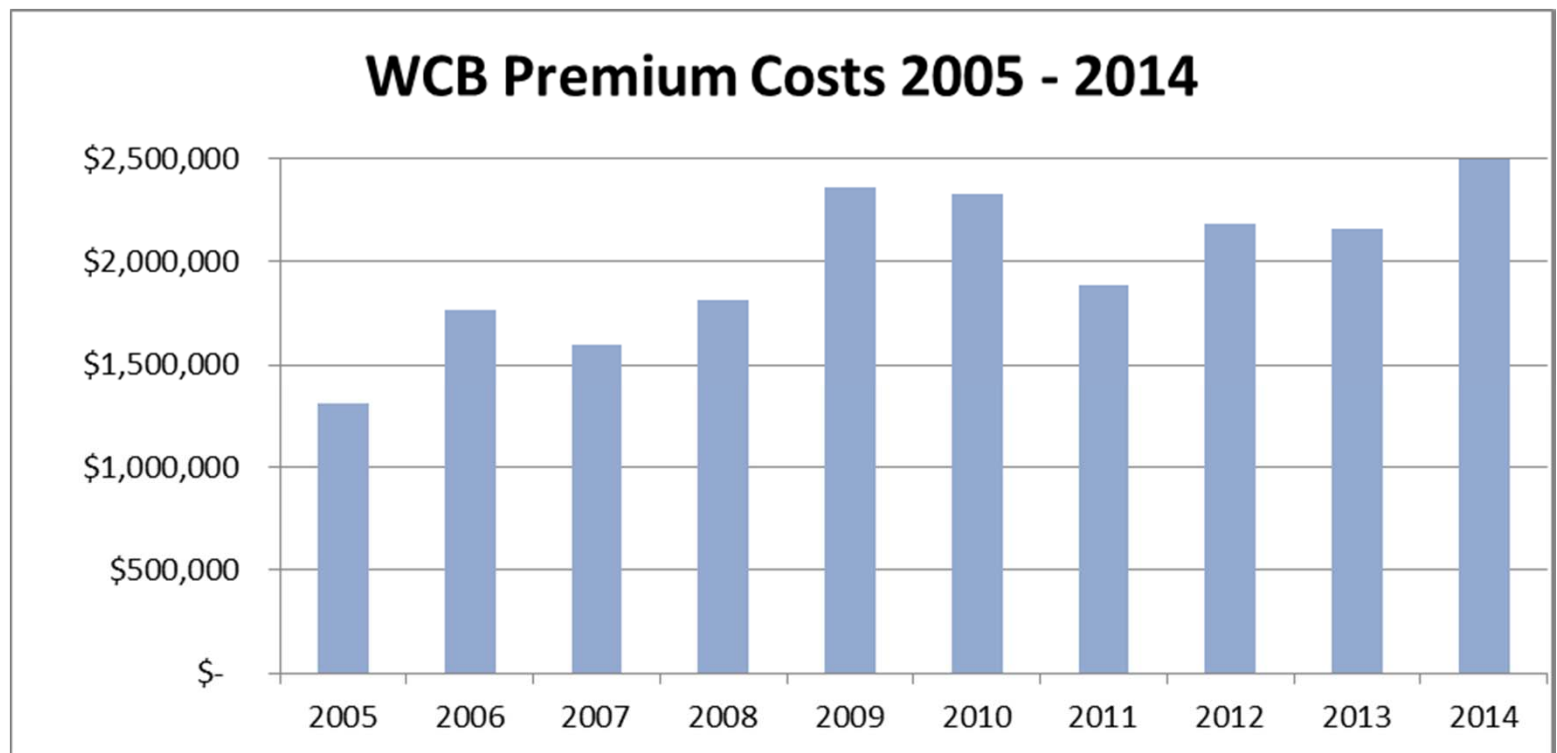
- Edmonton Fire Rescue's staff salaries increased by 46% from 2005 to 2014, which impacts the value of long term disability claims and increases the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Alberta premium costs.



After the legislation: Cost Impacts

Cost impacts of presumptive cancer legislation

- There was an initial insignificant costing increase over the first few years following presumptive cancer legislation. Since 2006, costs have stabilized. WCB premium cost increases can be correlated to staffing / wage increases.



After the legislation: Continued support from elected officials



AR 57944

September 15, 2011

Senator the Honourable Christopher Evans
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills,
Jobs and Workplace Relations
Electorate Office
51 Ord Street
West Perth WA 6005

Dear Honourable Evans:

**RE: Inquiry into the provisions of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation
Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill 2011**

In discussion with Edmonton Fire Chief, Ken Block, I understand that you are considering legislating the inclusion of presumptive coverage of certain types of cancer for firefighters. As Minister of Employment and Immigration, responsible for health and safety and the Workers' Compensation Board - Alberta, I can confirm that our recent legislative changes illustrate the Government of Alberta's commitment to firefighters.

Alberta's 3,500 firefighters have had presumptive cancer coverage since 2003. In 2010, the legislation was amended to cover additional cancers. In 2011, the *Workers' Compensation Act* was amended again to include 10,000 volunteer, part-time and casual firefighters.

Presumptive coverage for workplace illness is the exception in Alberta but due to the unique circumstances that firefighters face, it was felt to be an appropriate inclusion.

The rationale for expanding presumptive coverage was as follows:

As many of the cancers on the list are terminal, time is of the essence. This saves the firefighters and their families the stress of waiting for the results of complex and lengthy investigations. Presumptive legislation has ensured that firefighters with occupational cancer can access the workers compensation entitlements at a time when they and their families need it most.

.../2

Alberta

Senator the Honourable Chris Evans
Page 2

The Workers' Compensation Board - Alberta provides compensation to all workers it covers if they are injured or contract an illness as a result of work. Although there are many factors that can contribute to the risk of contracting cancer, firefighters are at greater risk than the general public of being exposed to a variety of toxic or cancer-causing agents. Firefighters often do not have control over what they are exposed to, they can only limit the exposure. Additionally, the science supports the causal relationship between the type of cancers on the list and the toxins they are exposed to.

After lengthy consideration and research, I can confirm that we consider the presumptive legislation to be the most effective means of safeguarding the interests of firefighters, their employers and the government. Presumptive legislation has ensured that firefighters with occupational cancer can access the workers compensation.

The legislation was introduced by the governing Progressive Conservative government in Alberta and unanimously supported by all parties in the legislature. I encourage Australia to join Alberta, and several other Canadian provinces, in enacting presumptive legislation to provide firefighters with the protections they need when having contracted occupational cancer.

If you wish to discuss this matter with me further, please do not hesitate to contact me at 011 (780) 415-4800 or email at thomas.lukaszuk@gov.ab.ca

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Lukaszuk
Minister of Employment and Immigration
MLA, Edmonton - Castle Downs

cc: Senator Gavin Marshall, Chair, Senate Standing Committee Committees on Education,
Employment and Workplace Relations - Legislation Committee
Senator Eric Abetz, Opposition Leader of the Senate, Parliament of Australia
Honourable Ed Stelmach, Premier of Alberta
Honourable Iris Evans, Minister of Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations
Chief Ken Block, Edmonton Fire Service

VIDEO

Alberta's presumptive cancer legislation change



In Memoriam - Last Alarm - In the Line of Duty

Wilson, Edward Orville

Bruce, William

Robinson, Robbie

Bowen, Walter

Vint, Robert

Brackenbury, Ray

Clark, Murray

Hopp, Ralph

-- 8 fireground deaths --

Kopinsky, John

Ashton, Les

Borecki, Randy

Wyndham, Paul

Tymchuk, Rick

Stevens, Clarke

Hayman, Larry

Nichol, Stanley

Harris, Alex

Chalmers, Robert

Northrup, Allan

Colcy, Lionel

Mathews, Don

Humeniuk, Joseph

D'Agostini, Alberto

Paul, Edward

-- 16 occupational cancer deaths --

December 16, 1922

January 13, 1940

October 7, 1948

April 22, 1951

June 14, 1963

December 3, 1964

August 15, 1976

August 15, 1976

-- 8 fireground deaths --

May 30, 1992

December 23, 2002

November 23, 2003

January 18, 2004

October 28, 2005

August 19, 2006

September 20, 2007

April 25, 2008

June 20, 2009

July 6, 2009

December 13, 2011

February 28, 2012

February 20, 2013

January 4, 2014

June 12, 2014

July 2, 2015

-- 16 occupational cancer deaths --



Discussion Time



Occupational Cancer in firefighters in the Nordic countries

Thank you



Tak



Tack



Takk



Kiitos



Danke



Dank je wel



Þakka þér



Occupational Cancer in firefighters in the Nordic countries

#WeAreYEG



Fire Chief Ken G. Block
Edmonton Fire Rescue Services

ken.block@edmonton.ca
10351 - 96 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5H 2H5
+1 (780) 496-1520
Twitter: @yegfirechief

