THE COST OF FIREFIGHTER OCCUPATIONAL CANCER

In 2017, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) asked the RAND Corporation to provide a quantifiable estimated dollar figure on the economic benefit of preventing death and illness related to firefighter occupational cancer. These figures are based off of the findings from the 2013 NIOSH study, where they evaluated the mortality and cancer incidence in a group of firefighters in the US.

The Rand Report refers to six types of cancer. These cancers had significantly higher mortality and incidence amongst Firefighters than the general population according to the 2013 NIOSH Study.

Types of Cancer	Average lifetime expected medical costs and productivity losses (2016 $)	
	Fatal Cases	Non-fatal cases
Buccal & Pharynx Cancers (Oral)	$827,945	$193,551
Colon, excluding Rectum	$848,927	$202,349
Esophagus	$865,312	$237,964
Kidney and Renal Pelvis	$884,674	$236,958
Lung Cancer	$814,963	$255,695
Malignant Mesothelioma	$700,866	$236,221

These figures do not include the cost of covering the shifts of firefighters who are undergoing treatment and recovering, nor do they include the expense of hiring/training new members if the sick firefighters are unable to return to work. There are also considerable costs once Workers Compensation, Pension and Line of Duty death benefits are factored into the equation.

Most importantly, one cannot put a price tag on the cost of losing a loved one to firefighter occupational cancer.