

As a professional firefighter for 29 years, I have grave concerns for my future health. Over the years, despite great advances in protective equipment to reduce exposure to toxic environments, I have come into contact with numerous by-products of fire and hazardous chemicals from incidents where initial protective uniform was inadequate. In the early days of my career, there was little protection from absorption or ingestion and marginal protection from inhalation. Little was known about the hazardous environment of a freshly extinguished fire. Not long ago, car fires were treated as relatively non-toxic until a real understanding of formaldehyde based fire products guided new protocols in personal protection. Foam concentrates have been found to be hazardous and exposure to these compounds was commonplace. The insidious nature of asbestos is all too well documented, but it is the emergency responders who have regularly contacted this carcinogen without knowing in many cases. It is well known that carcinogens can display their effects long after exposure and it is this time bomb that firefighters live with through their career and long into retirement.

Presumptive legislation for the cancers we see prevalent in the firefighting community is the fair approach to making a terrible diagnosis a little bit less catastrophic for the affected person and their family.

I urge you to carry this important legislation through parliament and join the other states which have seen the justice in its intent.

Yours faithfully

David Brumley