



# NEWS



## News Headlines 02/2/2022

- Firefighters face higher risk of cancer
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## Firefighters face higher risk of cancer

By Jene Estrada, HI-DESERT STAR

Posted: February 01, 2022



Cory Norton and his children, Cole and Tenley. Norton died on Sept. 15, 2020, from service-related cancer.

SAN BERNARDINO — Among firefighters, cancer is the leading cause of deaths in the line of duty. The International Association of Firefighters and the firefighter Cancer Support Network designated January as Firefighter Cancer Awareness month to help raise awareness for firefighters and the general public on cancer prevention and to support firefighters going through cancer treatment.

From 2015 to 2020, 75% of the firefighters added to the IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial died from occupational cancer, the group reports. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health found that firefighters have a 9% greater chance of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14% greater chance of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population.

Fire Chief Dan Munsey at the **San Bernardino County fire** department said this is due to all the carcinogens firefighters face on the job, in the smoke that they are exposed to on incident calls and in the diesel that fuels their engines.

“Firefighters are more susceptible to cancer,” Munsey said. “When I started in the fire service more than 30 years ago, it was a known risk but we didn’t know how to prevent it.”

Munsey said toxins are released into the air from the polymers used to build houses, the plastic used in manufacturing cars, chemicals on the ground and more. These toxins get onto the firefighters’ skin and attach to their gear. As firefighters across the world start to understand these dangers, they are also increasing prevention tactics.

“When I started we didn’t do simple things like washing out firefighters’ turnout gear,” Munsey said. “Carcinogens are carried in those structures. We now mandate that they are washed out after every incident.”

At the **San Bernardino County fire** department, firefighters are also now given a second set of gear to make sure they always have a clean set available. Their turnout gear is no longer allowed inside the station, but is instead kept outside, and turnout gear is also separated from the firefighter in the engine as they drive to a call.

“The gear is only in contact with the firefighter when they are on an incident,” Munsey said.

San Bernardino County firefighters are now issued special wipes so that they can wipe their skin immediately after an incident and they are also mandated to take a shower as soon as they return to their stations.

Stations have also been issued special equipment to keep the fumes from their engines out of their stations: a gas exhaust attachment that redirects the fumes outdoors. However, despite these precautions, firefighters are still contracting cancer at an increased rate.

In September 2020, 33-year-old Cory Norton, a former Yucca Valley firefighter and a Big Bear resident, succumbed after a five-year battle with epithelioid sarcoma, a rare kind of soft-tissue cancer.

“He contracted cancer on the job and he was a very young man who left behind a wife and kids,” Munsey said. “We also have several firefighters in the department who are battling cancer right now in various stages of treatment.”

Firefighters are encouraged to take all precautions they can to reduce their risk of cancer by following all of the department’s prevention protocols and receiving regular check-ups from their doctors. Learn more about occupational cancer prevention at [www.iaff.org/cancer-awareness-month](http://www.iaff.org/cancer-awareness-month).

<https://hidesertstar.com/news/181718/firefighters-face-higher-risk-of-cancer/>

## Injured Hiker Rescued

By Shannon D. Dicus, REDLANDS CITY NEWS GROUP

Posted: February 01, 2022



Mt. Baldy as viewed from Redlands.

On January 29, 2022, **San Bernardino County Fire** Department, requested San Bernardino County Sheriff's Aviation, to assist with locating an injured hiker in the Mt. Baldy area. Sheriff's helicopter 40King2 (40K2) responded to the Mt. Baldy area to assist with locating Thomas Copenhaver. 40K2 arrived in the area and located Copenhaver on a trail below San Antonio Falls. Copenhaver received injuries from a fall and could no longer hike. 40K2 relayed to Sheriff's helicopter Air Rescue 306 (AR306) that a hoist would be necessary to safely get Copenhaver to Fire Department personnel.

AR306 arrived on scene and was guided to Copenhaver's location by 40K2. AR306 hovered above Copenhaver while a Medic was hoisted down to him. Once the Medic assessed Copenhaver for injuries, he requested further equipment from AR306. AR306 lowered a rescue basket down to the Medic, Copenhaver was secured into the basket and hoisted back into the helicopter, followed by the Medic. AR306 transported Copenhaver to the San Antonio Dam where he was treated by **San Bernardino County Fire** Department personnel for his injuries.

<https://redlands.citynewsgroup.com/articles/injured-hiker-rescued>