



## **IAFC-VCOS and NVFC Release Lavender Ribbon Report Update to Reduce Occupational Cancer Risks**

The International Association of Fire Chiefs' Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS) and the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) have released an update to the *Lavender Ribbon Report* that provides 11 best practices for reducing exposure risks and preventing occupationally caused cancer in firefighters. The new *Lavender Ribbon Report Update* includes additional information, essays, articles, research, and ideas to implement best practices successfully.

Cancer is a leading health risk facing firefighters, primarily due to the chemicals and carcinogens they are exposed to while on the job. In 2018, VCOS and the NVFC released the original *Lavender Ribbon Report* to provide specific actions firefighters can take to protect themselves and their team from these risks. The *Lavender Ribbon Report Update* takes things a step further by sharing personal stories, examples of how departments are implementing the best practices, and other information to reinforce the actions firefighters need to take to lessen their exposure risks.

“The risks we face aren’t going anywhere, and we can’t remain stagnant in addressing this critical health and safety issue,” said Chief Brian McQueen, chair of the NVFC’s cancer subcommittee and co-author of both the *Lavender Ribbon Report* and the *Lavender Ribbon Report Update*. “This new release will equip firefighters with further tools and knowledge so they can successfully implement the best practices, along with motivation for why it is so urgent that we take action now. Don’t let this document sit on the shelf – use it so that we can prevent the tragedy of firefighter cancer.”

Chief John M. Buckman III, VCOS Educational Coordinator, commented, “The VCOS hopes that all public safety personnel will read both the original *Lavender Ribbon Report* and this updated version. Firefighter health and wellness, especially occupational cancer, must be a top priority and is a continuous process that requires strong leadership and commitment to take the right actions. This updated report is designed to reignite the passion for helping firefighters protect themselves from carcinogen exposure. This is a large document and will require significant individual and organizational commitment. Don’t let its size stop you from using each piece to improve your organization.”

Studies show that firefighters have higher rates of many types of cancer than the general population. It is critical that both individual firefighters and fire service leaders implement the best practices to reduce exposures to toxic chemicals and carcinogens. Use the *Lavender Ribbon Report Update* to implement practices that will make the department safer and reduce the number of firefighters who have to face the anguish of a cancer diagnosis.



Download the *Lavender Ribbon Report Update* on the NVFC website at [www.nvfc.org/lrr](http://www.nvfc.org/lrr) and the VCOS website at [www.vcos.org/beatffcancer](http://www.vcos.org/beatffcancer).

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### **About the VCOS**

The IAFC Volunteer and Combination Officers Section's (VCOS) mission is to develop and enhance effective, professional leaders of the volunteer and combination fire service by providing tools, resources, and representation to lead their organizations effectively. The VCOS vision is to be the leading volunteer/combination fire service organization in the United States, representing and educating leaders of the volunteer and combination fire/rescue service. For more information, visit [IAFC.org/VCOS](http://IAFC.org/VCOS).

### **About the NVFC**

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides critical resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation. Learn more at [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org).