



## **Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Position Paper Presumptive Legislation**

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC) commends the Province of Ontario for the passing of 'Bill 221: Presumptive Legislation for Firefighters' which provides firefighters with coverage for eight different types of cancers associated with fire fighting or for having a heart attack within twenty-four hours of an incident.

The regulations which followed Bill 221 do not provide presumptive coverage to approximately sixty-five (65) % of Ontario firefighters who are either volunteers or part time firefighters within their communities. Also not included are forestry firefighters and fire investigators.

A single incident may expose any firefighter to conditions that may negatively affect their health. The danger is not limited to urban areas as more and more industries are locating in areas outside urban boundaries and as industrial style agriculture expands. Fires can occur anywhere.

Firefighters routinely put themselves at risk to save others. Volunteer firefighters may, over their careers, respond to as many or more structure fires than their larger department counterparts due to their ability to respond twenty-four hours a day, everyday. Composite fire departments routinely have career and volunteer firefighters working side by side. Whether in a large city or a small community, whether career or volunteer, the health risks for a firefighter are the same. A firefighter is a firefighter.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs supports the adoption of a regulation that provides the same presumptive coverage to all firefighters. Volunteer firefighters, forestry firefighters and fire investigators should have the same cancer and heart coverage as their fellow career firefighters, for their own protection and for the well being of their families.