



Setting alight the risk of firefighters contracting cancer

In 2007 the International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC) identified a link between firefighting and a variety of cancers and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Since then IOM has undertaken two studies into the impact of cancer risks within firefighters. One in the form of a review for the Industrial Injuries Advisory board and secondly a review of cancers associated with firefighting.

Both studies highlighted a positive association between firefighting and a variety of cancers including colon, rectal, bladder and prostate cancer; as well as melanoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. With the link being attributed to a variety of reasons including differences in hazardous exposure and differing firefighting strategies from country to country.

The work undertaken by IOM has been influential in understanding the relationship between firefighting and cancer whilst also identifying the need for more research to be undertaken to truly understand the risks to both male and female firefighters.