

Firefighters and Police Officers Receive Assistance

The House approved legislation this week assisting firefighters and police officers who become disabled due to a work-related injury. Senate File 226 establishes a presumption that cancer and infectious diseases are work-related for the purposes of disability and death benefits.

Under the bill, cancer and infectious diseases contracted by firefighters and police officers, who members of the statewide fire and police retirement system (411 System),

are presumed to be a disease contracted while on active duty due to the job for purposes of establishing a disability pension or providing a death benefit.

This means that those firefighters and officers, under the 411 System, would not have to pay for their own health care treatment. The cost for this coverage will be paid by the members of the Municipal Fire and Police Officers' Retirement System (411 System) through

an increase in their contribution rates.

Since January 1, 1992, the beginning of the 411 system, there has been 13 cancer disabilities. Ten of these were considered work-related. There has been one disability due to contracting an infectious disease. Eighteen states have a similar presumption for firefighters in their statute.

This proposal applies to illnesses diagnosed after July 1, 2009, the effective date of this bill.