

Firefighter and Police Officer Assistance

Governor Culver signed Senate File 226 to assist firefighters and police officers who become disabled due to a work-related injury. The bill 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 are members of the statewide fire and police retirement system (411 System), are presumed to be a disease contracted while on active duty. This makes them job-related for purposes of establishing a disability pension or

providing a death benefit. Cancer includes prostate cancer, primary brain cancer, malignant melanoma, leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, bladder cancer, colorectal cancer, multiple myeloma, testicular cancer, kidney cancer, ovarian, breast, uterine, and cervix cancers. Infectious disease includes human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, all strains of hepatitis, meningococcal meningitis, and mycobacterium tuberculosis.

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.