

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS21242

This bill addresses the nearly impossible burden of proving occupational diseases associated with firefighting within the workers compensation system. Research has established that firefighters are significantly more likely to develop certain types of cancer than the general population. Under current law, the burden of proof for these known occupational diseases is nearly impossible to overcome as exposures are chronic, occur over long periods of time, and are uncertain regarding specific toxins and carcinogens present at any given structure fire. This bill would change existing workers compensation law so that it would be presumed that such diseases were occupationally related unless a preponderance of evidence showed otherwise.

FISCAL NOTE

The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) estimates that "The impact on Idaho's workers compensation system costs is expected to be negligible since the occupational class directly targeted by this proposal – professional firefighters – represents a relatively small portion of Idaho's total system benefits." Their original analysis estimated an increase of 2.3% to 7.8% in work comp premiums for employers of firefighters. Of the budgets affected, the average impact on overall department budgets would be approximately 0.1% to 0.44%. Based on this original NCCI estimate, the effect of this bill will be approximately \$48,500 to \$165,000 total on government entities spread over all the cities and fire districts in the state. There is no effect on the general fund.

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