

Public Safety Program PPOP

What are our priorities?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Public Safety Program works with partners in industry, labor, professional and trade associations, academia, and government agencies. The program focuses on the following priority research topics for public safety workers:

- Reducing injuries and deaths from motor vehicles and violence
- Reducing exposures to hazardous substances and infectious diseases
- Improving health and wellness, especially heart health

What do we do?

- Study risk factors, including exposures, that can lead to: cancer, infectious diseases, and heart and respiratory diseases
- Use findings from risk factor studies to recommend prevention strategies
- Approve respirators and conduct post market activities to reduce inhalation hazard exposures
- Manage the [National Firefighter Registry](#), a voluntary registry of U.S. firefighters, to track cancer trends and risk factors
- Lead the development of personal protective equipment (PPE) standards and guidance
- Investigate deaths to understand what caused them and make recommendations through the [Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program \(FFFIPP\)](#)
- Increase awareness and knowledge of opportunities to prevent injuries, illnesses, and deaths among public safety workers

What have we accomplished?

- Published a journal [article](#) describing effects of aerial ladder rung spacing on firefighter biometrics. Results indicate reduced rung spacing may lead to lower biomechanical stress; better climbing efficiency and safety; and reduced climbing speed disparity across sexes
- Published a journal [article](#) detailing chemical contamination of turnout gear during controlled fires involving modern furnishings. To limit exposures to harmful contaminants firefighters should wear a self-contained breathing apparatus during response and wash or decontaminate their PPE after fire events
- Collected samples of wildland-urban interface exposure measures (e.g., per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)) through the [Fire Fighter Cancer Cohort Study](#)
- Published a [NIOSH Science Blog](#) on the health risks and exposures for wildland firefighters (including COVID-19)
- Published interim guidance for [first responders](#) and [correctional officers](#) who anticipate close contact with persons who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19

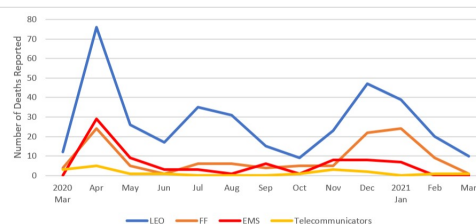
What's next?

- Measure possible exposures to firefighters from various substances found on protective clothing, including PFAS
- Assess the effectiveness of washing wildland firefighting gear to remove toxicants
- Develop methods for assessing lifecycle and decontamination processes for firefighter PPE
- Evaluate impact of different base layers and tightening turnout gear openings (e.g., neck and waist) on reducing dermal and airborne contaminant exposure
- Use the state of Ohio's workers' compensation data and phone interviews to describe law enforcement and firefighter workplace injuries
- Publish an article on working hours, sleep, and fatigue among public safety workers
- Produce an online training program to educate law enforcement officers about the health and safety risks related to shift work and working long hours
- Develop training video on row house firefighting tactics

At-A-Glance

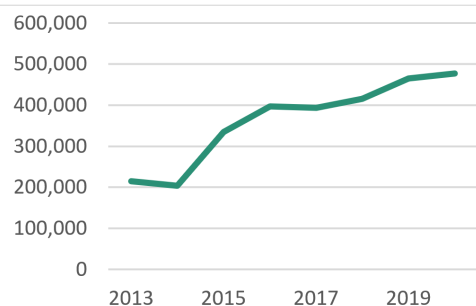
The Public Safety Program leads efforts to prevent injuries, illnesses, and fatalities among workers in law enforcement, structural and wildland fire service, corrections, and the emergency medical service (EMS). This snapshot shows recent accomplishments and upcoming activities.

Publicly Reported Deaths of First Responders Attributed to COVID-19, by Month



Source: [NHTSA OEMS](#) unpublished data; April 1, 2021

Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program Website Views, 2013-2020



Source: Program records of annual website visits

Publication Spotlight: COVID-19 Interim Guidance for First Responders

The screenshot shows the title page of the CDC document 'COVID-19 Interim Guidance for First Responders'. It includes the CDC logo, the title, and a brief description of the document's purpose: 'Interim Recommendations for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points/Emergency Communication Centers (PSAP/ECCL) in the United States During the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic'. It also mentions the date 'Updated July 15, 2020' and a 'Summary of Recent Changes' section.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

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