



## Where Do Firefighter Injuries Come From?

Throughout the Comp Alliance's thirty-year existence, the workplace injury experience for fire departments has been relatively consistent. The history of causes of firefighter injuries, both full-time and volunteer, are below. Please review the information, compare it to your fire department injury history, and look to address corrective measures to control and minimize these types of injuries, with assistance from our Risk Management team.

### Slip, Trip, and Fall Injuries

- Interior: Hazards within fire department facilities like stairs and limited space
- Exterior: Hazards like a parking lot, building access, and time spent on feet.
- Environmental risk factors and types of activity:
  - Icy or snowy ground
  - Uneven terrain, holes
  - Sidewalk or a change in level
  - Stairway or steps
  - Wet surface
  - Debris, rocks, or other obstacles on the ground
  - Change in indoor floor level
  - Poor visibility
  - Furniture
  - Unfamiliar environments
- General location of the event:
  - Lack of visual cues due to darkness, smoke, limited visibility conditions, and underfoot surface or ground
  - Crowd control
  - Rushed efforts
  - Dangerous conditions
  - Carrying objects

### Physical Exertion-Related Injuries

- Strain injuries sustained from overexertion
- Often facing unknown situations that involve sudden rigorous activities
- Events are unplanned and occur in a variety of settings
- Engaging in forcible entries
- Operating charged hose lines
- Strain injuries sustained while lifting



## Burn/Inhalation Injuries

- Inhalation from toxic smoke is the primary cause of death from fires.
- Smoke inhalation causes acute life-threatening injuries and results in long-term lung and neurological damage.
- Firefighters can go down due to various circumstances which may lead to burn or inhalation injuries.

## Mental and Emotional Stress

According to the National Institute of Justice, mental and emotional stress contribute to physical and mental fatigue, increasing the potential for injury.

- Dangerous job functions
- Emergency conditions, including serious injuries to others
- Inadequate or broken equipment
- Frequent rotating shifts
- Regular changes in duties
- Long hours

Over the next few days as we recognize the importance of fire prevention and firefighter protection, the Comp Alliance will address many of these causes of injury and provide controls for their mitigation.