



Tips from Training

Skin Cancer and Firefighters



Issued: 7/30/2021
78 of 2021



Sunscreen dispenser located at the Fire Academy
[FDNY and Mollie's Fund Partnership](#)



Scan QR or click link to
<https://molliesfund.org>

Skin cancer is a common cancer in the general population and therefore requires a greater educational push to market the message and decrease skin cancer rates. For firefighters, the risk is even greater. **Like so many other cancers, firefighters have an increased chance of developing skin cancer, a 1.39 times greater risk.** All FDNY training locations contain sunscreen lotion dispensers complete with an attached message of skin cancer awareness. These are the same type of sunscreen dispensers that you may find at your local beach or park.

- **The American Cancer Society reports that more skin cancers are diagnosed than all other cancers combined.**
- Skin cancer is the most prevalent cancer in America, but it is also one of the most curable if detected and treated early. It develops when unchecked DNA damage triggers cells to grow uncontrollably and form cancerous tumors.
- While skin cancer lesions typically occur on sun-exposed areas of the skin, such as the face, hands, neck, ears, scalp, shoulders, and back, they can also appear on unexposed areas of the body.
- Lesions take on a different appearance depending on the type of skin cancer present—basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, or melanoma.
- **Melanoma is one of the most common cancers for FDNY members. Melanoma cancer rates for firefighters are significantly elevated when compared to non-firefighters.**
- Skin tone: Lighter-skinned individuals have a greater risk of developing melanoma than those with darker skin tones. The risk is also higher for individuals with blond or red hair, blue or green eyes, and skin that burns or freckles easily.
- Use a broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) every day. For extended outdoor activity, use a water-resistant, broad-spectrum (UVA/UVB) sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher).
- Sunscreen must be used year-round and on days with cloud cover; UV rays are **always** present.
- Examine your skin head-to-toe [every month](#) and **see a dermatologist at least once a year** for a professional skin exam.

*As a sophomore in college, Mollie Biggane discovered a mole on her thigh. In the following six months, she underwent surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. **The Mollie Biggane Melanoma Foundation was created in her memory after her tragic death at the age of twenty.** The mission of Mollie's Fund is to increase awareness for melanoma prevention, provide information and services on skin cancer detection, and support melanoma patients through education of the latest treatments: **The FDNY has partnered with this organization to raise awareness.***

Submit a potential Training Tip via email to: TrainingTips@fdny.nyc.gov