

## Richard Hooks Reports Alarming Epidemic of Lung Cancer Among Firefighters

Written by Australian Business

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SAN ANTONIO, TX, September 21, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- The brave men and women who dedicate their lives to fighting fires and rescuing civilians put themselves in harm's way for the greater good of humanity every day. However, according to

[Richard Hooks](#)

, a regional coordinator for the Texas Department of Emergency Management, some of these individuals develop needless medical problems due to a troubling lack of safety regulations. As highlighted in an

[article](#)

on FireEngineering.com, many professional firefighters today are simply not informed of the potentially serious consequences of smoke inhalation.

With so much information widely available today concerning the health risks of breathing in smoke and ash, one might assume that firefighters would avoid such harmful contaminants. However, the author of the article reports a surprisingly different story: "Soot from fire smoke is seen as a marker of success in [the firefighting] profession. The dirtier the bunker gear, the better. It's the trademark of achievement. So accepting that fire smoke is one of the job's deadliest enemies requires using the dreaded word 'change'." Having served as a firefighter before, Richard Hooks has, unfortunately, sometimes noticed very similar attitudes among his colleagues.

Although smoke inhalation is always a serious risk for firefighters when rescuing an individual from a burning building, lung damage can also occur after the emergency is over. In most cases, firefighters are required to return to the location of a blaze after the situation has been stabilized in order to perform a routine inspection, as Mr. Hooks explains. According to him, if workers do not wear the proper protective gear and use respiration systems during this process, they can develop deadly breathing diseases.

The FireEngineer.com article goes on to explain several solutions for solving this widespread problem. One very important safety procedure highlighted that many firefighting groups are now employing is the technique of atmospheric monitoring. This will not only save the lives of rescue workers, it will also protect individuals who live near burned buildings.

Understanding the preventative power of new technologies and safety procedures, Richard Hooks laments the fact that so many firefighters are still injured: "As advanced and scientific as the fire service has become in recent years, we are still losing too many young women and men to cancer as a result of not utilizing some of the simple strategies mentioned in this article. Simple procedures such as setting up detection monitors and staying 'on air' while conducting overhaul operations are smart and safe. These procedures should be standard in every departments SOP book."

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Richard Hooks suggests that all firefighters and citizens alike take the time to learn how to prevent deadly lung infections.

### ABOUT:

[Richard Hooks](#) has over 30 years of experience in firefighting. He is the former Fire Chief for the City of Corpus Christi. Mr. Hooks received his education at Del Mar College and at Texas A & M University in Corpus Christi, Texas, where he earned over 100 credit hours of higher-level coursework. From 1973 until 1976, Mr. Hooks courageously defended his fellow Americans as a member of the United States Coast Guard. When he is not working or promoting firefighter safety causes, he enjoys fishing and sailing his boat off the coast of Texas, especially around the Corpus Christi Bay area.