



CAPS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022



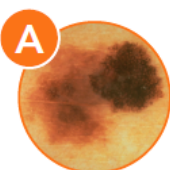
SKIN CANCER PREVENTION

Our summer newsletter highlights an important topic for firefighters - skin cancer prevention. Board-certified dermatologist Dr. Christine Kannler reviews simple actions firefighters can take to reduce their risk for skin cancer.

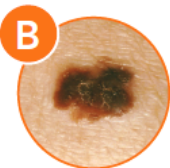


Spot skin cancer: Learn the ABCDEs of melanoma

Learn the skin cancer ABCDEs. If you notice any of these, contact your doctor or dermatologist right away.



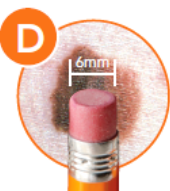
A stands for **ASYMMETRY**. One half of the spot is unlike the other half.



B stands for **BORDER**. The spot has an irregular, scalloped, or poorly defined border.



C stands for **COLOR**. The spot has varying colors from one area to the next, such as shades of tan, brown or black, or areas of white, red, or blue.



D stands for **DIAMETER**. While melanomas are usually greater than 6 mm, or about the size of a pencil eraser, when diagnosed, they can be smaller.



E stands for **EVOLVING**. The spot looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape, or color. Example:



Did you know?

- Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States.
- It is also one of the most preventable cancers.
- When detected early, treatment is very effective.
- Even if you have a long history of exposure, it's never too late to practice prevention efforts.
- Anyone can develop skin cancer, regardless of skin tone.
- Melanoma is the deadliest type of skin cancer and usually develops suddenly as a new mole or dark spot. However, melanoma is less common than other types of skin cancer that are rarely fatal:



- Basil cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer. Skin may develop a flesh-colored, pearl-like bump, or a pinkish patch.



- Squamous cell carcinoma is the 2nd most common skin cancer. It may look like a firm, red bump, scaly patch, or a sore that heals and reappears.

WHAT IS CAPS?

The "Firefighter Cancer Assessment & Prevention Study" (CAPS) is a partnership between public health researchers and the fire service.

The goal of CAPS is to characterize cancer risk factors and prevention activities in volunteer firefighters.

Information from CAPS will be used to improve firefighters' health by reducing their cancer-related disability and death.

CAPS began in 2019 as a pilot study with the NJ Toms River Fire Department with funding from Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health and the Rutgers Cancer Institute of NJ. In 2021, with additional funding from FEMA, CAPS expanded to partner with other volunteer fire departments in NJ and other parts of the US.

CAPS is a partner of the "Fire Fighter Cancer Cohort Study" (FFCCS) to help volunteer firefighters get involved in this important research.

WHAT IS THE FFCCS?

The Fire Fighter Cancer Cohort Study (FFCCS) is a national 30-year FEMA-funded study of firefighters focused on understanding cancer-causing exposures, their effects, and cancer prevention.

Learn more at www.ffccs.org

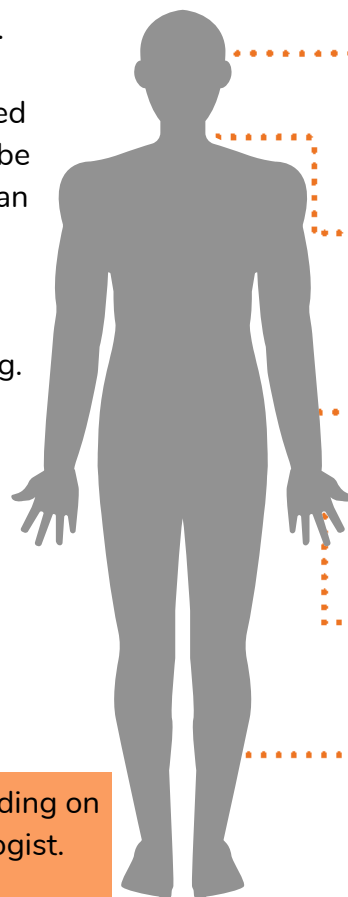
What should firefighters do?

Firefighters may be at increased risk for developing skin cancer from exposure to the sun and chemicals. For example, polychlorinated biphenyls cause melanoma, and soot causes non-melanoma skin cancer.

Here are some recommendations for ways to reduce your risk for skin cancer.

Remember, even small changes can make a difference!

- Do regular self-examinations, as shown on the right.
 - Any non-healing wound, including areas within tattoos and under facial hair, that has not resolved after 3-4 weeks should be evaluated as it could be cancer. Cold sores on the lips never last more than 3-4 weeks.
- Use broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen every day.
 - Keep some on fire trucks and in your personal vehicle. Apply to any skin not covered by clothing.
- Cover up - wear hats, long sleeves, and pants to protect you from the sun's rays.
- Seek shade, especially between 10am and 2pm when the sun is strongest.
 - Remember that snow, water, and sand reflect more of the sun's rays.
- Practice decontamination after every call, including using skin wipes. Removing toxins from the skin's surface helps reduce absorption by the body.



- 1 Examine your body front and back in a mirror, then look at the right and left sides with your arms raised.
- 2 Examine the back of your neck and scalp with a hand mirror. Part your hair for a closer look at your scalp.
- 3 Bend your elbows and look carefully at your forearms, underarms, and palms.
- 4 Check your back and buttocks with a hand mirror.
- 5 Finally, look at the backs of your legs and feet, the spaces between your toes, and the soles of your feet.

"If you see a spot of skin that's changing, itching, or bleeding on any area of your body, see a board-certified dermatologist.

When found early, skin cancer is highly treatable."

- American Academy of Dermatology

Source: <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/skin-cancer/find>

CAPS Updates

- CAPS continues making progress toward our goal of enrolling 600 volunteer firefighters; half from New Jersey and half from elsewhere in the US.
- CAPS will offer the opportunity for department-wide report back sessions to share our findings. Our team will schedule these events with department leadership over the coming months, so stay tuned!

CAPS National Enrollment Goal



QUESTIONS ABOUT CAPS?

CONTACT US TODAY CAPS@SPH.RUTGERS.EDU

Resources

- Listen to [this episode](#) of 30 In 30 Out, a podcast about firefighter health and safety. This latest episode is about skin cancer in the fire service.
- The [American Academy of Dermatology](#) has great skin-cancer resources
 - Free [skin cancer screening](#) events
 - Find a [board-certified dermatologist](#) if you don't already have one
- [Firefighter Cancer Support Network](#) offers resources to firefighters and their loved ones dealing with a cancer diagnosis.
- [National Cancer Institute](#) screening resources.



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