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Help wanted: NIOSH seeks firefighters for cancer prevention research

April 25, 2019

Washington — NIOSH is looking for more than 1 million U.S. firefighters to take part in a voluntary registry, as the agency seeks to understand why those in the field are at greater risk for certain cancers.

Firefighters have higher rates of digestive, oral, respiratory and urinary cancer than the general population, NIOSH research shows. They also have nearly twice as many cases of malignant mesothelioma, a rare type of cancer triggered by asbestos exposure.

NIOSH is seeking input on ways to boost participation in the registry, with a goal of more than 1.1 million responses. The agency published a [Request for Information](#) in the March 28 *Federal Register*.

Enrollment in the registry is expected to begin next year. The [Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2018](#) directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and maintain the registry, which will include career, paid

on-call and volunteer firefighters.

Researchers said they hope participation in the registry will help raise awareness of improved firefighter protections against cancer, “including advancements in the design and care of personal protective equipment and practices that can lower firefighters’ exposure to hazardous substances,” NIOSH states in a March 28 press release.

Comments on the RFI are due May 28.