



South Carolina State Firefighters' Association
Position Statement on the
Implementation of a Tobacco Free Program, Including Electronic Smoking/Vaping
for Fire Departments in South Carolina

Based on scientific studies, the Surgeon General of the United States has determined the use of tobacco products as being harmful to one's health and second-hand smoke as hazardous to those exposed. The National Fire Protection Association Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Programs (NFPA 1500), clearly states all fire department facilities shall be designated smoke free.

The South Carolina State Firefighters' Association supports the National Fire Service Cancer Initiative and encourages chiefs of fire and rescue departments to do the same. The Association encourages all chiefs to be proactive in promoting a tobacco free workplace, including electronic smoking/vaping; lessening employees' exposure to the known toxins and carcinogens, as well as other potentially hazardous substances produced from their use in the workplace.

It is nationally recognized that firefighting is an inherently dangerous occupation and the possibility for a firefighter to potentially be exposed to a lifetime of particulate contamination in a single fire event exist; therefore, it is imperative that we take this proactive and positive action to reduce/eliminate employee exposure probabilities on the job. This action is consistent with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) mandate that requires employers to provide their employees a workplace free from recognized hazards.

Data has shown the harmful effects of tobacco use and while the legal landscape is still being developed around e-cigarettes/vaping, some recent studies have shown carcinogens to be present in many e-cigarettes and/or battery-operated products that vaporize nicotine, flavoring and other chemicals.

With an alarming increase in the nature and extent of cancer cases directly linked to a firefighter's exposure to hazardous environments; and whereas firefighter injuries and sudden cardiac deaths can be dramatically reduced with a comprehensive safety, health and wellness program; the South Carolina Firefighters' Association adopted and published a position statement on Safety, Health and Wellness Programs for Fire Departments in South Carolina. This position statement further supports and encourages a tobacco free workplace, which also prohibits the use of electronic-smoking/vaping in the workplace.

The South Carolina Firefighters' Association strongly encourages all Fire Chiefs to adopt and implement the same. This may be beneficial not only to the health of firefighters and their families in South Carolina, but also may strengthen the support and sustainability for cancer presumptive healthcare in South Carolina.

Adopted by action of the Executive Committee on: March 30, 2017.