

**Testimony before Labor and Public Employees Committee Public Hearing
January Session, 2013**



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New Haven Fire Lt. Frank Ricci is Contributing Editor of for Fire Engineering and a Co-host of the radio show "Politics & Tactics". He is a contributing author with Dr. Cone from Yale to Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (CRC Press 2008) He has lectured at the Reagan Library on Firefighter Safety, Civil Rights and the U.S. Constitution. Lt. Ricci is a contributing author to the Firefighters Handbook I & II (PennWell 2008.) He is a FDIC instructor and lecturer and has won a landmark case before the US Supreme Court. Frank has testified before Congress and has been a lead consultant for Yale on several studies. Frank has worked on a heavy rescue unit covering Bethesda and Chevy Chase. He is the lead author of Fire Engineering's Tactical Perspective Series: Command, Search, Ventilation, Fire Attack and Mayday.

**New Haven Fire Fighters SUPPORT S.B. No. 925 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING
WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR FIREFIGHTERS AND POLICE OFFICERS.**

Whether your home, business or work place is on fire your firefighters throughout the state answer the alarm within minutes. Firefighters protect and save lives, tax base and jobs. Firefighting is dangerous and has many inherent risks. Passage of this Bill would bring our coverage in line with states ranging from Vermont all the way to Alaska.

Firefighter Fatalities and Injuries Resulting from Suppression

The smoke that we are exposed too is not the Camp fire Smoke you may know. The smoke firefighters face is a chemical cocktail with over 2,000 toxic chemicals in it, many absorbed through the skin, yet after a review of 105 autopsies; the results usually indicate carbon monoxide, hydrogen chloride, acrolein, soot, and hydrogen cyanide as the leading contributing causes of death.

Heart attacks account for over 44% of firefighter line-of-duty deaths each year. The cumulative effect of chronic exposure to CO can act as a catalyst in initiating a heart attack. Oxygen is fuel for the heart, and when oxygen is transported it is impeded by CO and other chemicals in the blood.

The heart has to work harder to keep up, increasing the potential for a heart attack. Additional factors for firefighters are exhaustion from over-exertion from physically demanding work, Also added heat stress from our protective clothing. It is critical to understand that firefighters are exposed to smoke at every fire. As an example just last week at one of New Haven 2nd alarm fires in the same night Fox 61 news reporter Mike Magnoil standing a block away stated, "the smoke is quite impressive and it is actually difficult to breathe. Heart attacks and strokes often occur at the fire station or when the firefighter returns home.

Based on human and animal data cardiac arrhythmias resulting from a heart attack can take over 24 hours before the heart can return to normal telemetry or result in complete pump failure.

This is why the general public who has a heart attack is kept 18 to 24 hours in the hospital for evaluation. Note these individuals have not been exposed to toxic gases.

The presumption of the bill is also critical. Hospitals do not have the technology to test for blood gases accurately do to per hospital care. Administering Oxygen on scene and CPR substantially alters the body blood gases. When it comes to physiology toxic gases are either accumulating in or venting out of the blood stream. Firefighters protect our citizens now we ask this committee to protect us.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Frank Ricci