



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

Substitute Bill No. 1426



AN ACT MAKING CHANGES TO THE FIREFIGHTERS CANCER RELIEF PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 7-313p of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

3 (a) For purposes of this section:

4 (1) "Firefighter" has the same meaning as provided in section 7-313g;

5 (2) "Compensation" has the same meaning as provided in section 31-
6 275;

7 (3) "Municipal employer" has the same meaning as provided in
8 section 7-467; [and]

9 (4) "Interior structural firefighter" means an individual who performs
10 fire suppression, fire rescue, or both, either inside of buildings or in
11 closed structures that are involved in a fire station beyond the incident
12 stage;

13 (5) "State employer" means the state of Connecticut, including any
14 agency or department of the state and any board of trustees of a state-
15 owned or supported college or university and branches thereof; and

16 (6) "Administrative law judge" has the same meaning as provided in

17 section 31-275.

18 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 568, a firefighter
19 diagnosed with any condition of cancer affecting the skin, brain, skeletal
20 system, digestive system, endocrine system, respiratory system,
21 lymphatic system, reproductive system, urinary system or
22 hematological system resulting in such firefighter's death or temporary
23 or permanent total or partial disability, or such firefighter's dependents,
24 as the case may be, shall receive (1) compensation and benefits from the
25 account, established pursuant to section 7-313h, in the same amount and
26 in the same manner that would be provided under chapter 568 if such
27 death or disability was caused by [a personal injury which] an
28 occupational disease which arose out of and in the course of such
29 firefighter's employment and was suffered in the line of duty and within
30 the scope of such firefighter's employment, and (2) (A) the same
31 retirement or survivor benefits, from the municipal or state retirement
32 system under which such firefighter is covered, or (B) the disability
33 benefits available from the Connecticut State Firefighters Association
34 pursuant to section 3-123, that would have been paid under such system
35 if such death or disability was caused by [a personal injury which] an
36 occupational disease which arose out of and in the course of such
37 firefighter's employment and was suffered in the line of duty and within
38 the scope of such firefighter's employment, provided such firefighter
39 has:

40 (i) Submitted to a physical examination subsequent to such member's
41 entry into service that failed to reveal any evidence of [or a propensity
42 for] such cancer;

43 (ii) Has not used cigarettes, as defined in section 12-285, during the
44 fifteen-year period prior to such diagnosis;

45 (iii) Was employed for at least five years in any combination as (I) an
46 interior structural firefighter at a paid municipal, state or volunteer fire
47 department, or (II) a local fire marshal, deputy fire marshal, fire
48 investigator, fire inspector or such other class of inspectors or

49 investigators for whom the State Fire Marshal and the Codes and
50 Standards Committee, acting jointly, have adopted minimum standards
51 of qualification pursuant to section 29-298; and

52 (iv) Has submitted to annual medical health screenings as
53 recommended by such firefighter's medical provider.

54 (c) Any individual who is no longer actively serving as a firefighter
55 but who otherwise would be eligible for compensation or benefits
56 pursuant to the provisions of subsection (b) of this section may apply
57 for such benefits or compensation not more than five years from the date
58 such individual last served as a firefighter.

59 (d) To apply for compensation or benefits pursuant to subsections (b)
60 and (c) of this section, a firefighter shall provide notice to the Workers'
61 Compensation Commission and [the municipality in which such
62 firefighter is employed] the municipal employer or state employer of
63 such firefighter, in the same manner as workers' compensation claims
64 under chapter 568.

65 (e) (1) The [municipality in which] municipal employer or state
66 employer that employs the firefighter [is employed] applying for
67 compensation and benefits shall administer claims submitted pursuant
68 to subsections (b) and (c) of this section in the same manner as workers'
69 compensation claims under chapter 568. Such [municipality] municipal
70 employer or state employer shall (A) pay to the firefighter the
71 compensation or benefits such firefighter is entitled to, and (B) submit,
72 in a form and manner provided by the State Treasurer, an application
73 for reimbursement from the firefighters cancer relief account. Payments
74 for reimbursement shall be processed not later than forty-five days after
75 such application is received.

76 (2) Any costs associated with a firefighter's treatment of cancer that
77 are not covered by such firefighter's personal or group health insurance
78 shall be reimbursed, pursuant to this subsection, by the firefighters
79 cancer relief account, provided such treatment complies with the
80 provisions of section 31-294d.

81 (3) If the firefighters cancer relief account becomes insolvent, [a
82 municipality shall have no obligation] no municipal employer or state
83 employer shall be obligated to continue providing compensation and
84 benefits pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section and
85 subsection (c) of this section.

86 (f) A firefighter may request that a denial of compensation or benefits
87 made pursuant to subsection (e) of this section be reconsidered, and an
88 administrative law judge shall have the authority to adjudicate such
89 claim in accordance with the provisions of section 31-278, as amended
90 by this act, in the same manner as workers' compensation claims under
91 chapter 568.

92 (g) If a physical examination was required by an employer at the time
93 of the firefighter's employment, as a condition for such employment, or
94 required annually for means of continued employment, a firefighter
95 shall not be required to show proof of such examination in the
96 maintenance of a claim under subsection (b) or (c) of this section or
97 under such municipal or state retirement system.

98 (h) Any benefits provided under subsection (b) or (c) of this section
99 shall be offset by any other benefits a firefighter or such firefighter's
100 dependents may be entitled to receive from such firefighter's municipal
101 employer or state employer under the provisions of chapter 568 or the
102 municipal or state retirement system under which they are covered as a
103 result of any condition or impairment of health caused by occupational
104 cancer resulting in such firefighter's death or permanent total or partial
105 disability.

106 (i) The State Treasurer shall have the authority to audit
107 reimbursements provided by the account pursuant to subsection (e) of
108 this section.

109 (j) No payment of compensation made under this section shall be
110 used as evidence in support of any future claim under chapter 568.

111 (k) Except as provided in subsections (l) and (m) of this section, any

112 firefighter that receives compensation under this section shall be
113 prohibited from filing a claim under chapter 568 for a diagnosis of
114 cancer.

115 (l) If the firefighters cancer relief account becomes insolvent, a
116 firefighter that was receiving compensation under this section may file
117 a claim under chapter 568, within one year of receiving notice from [the
118 municipality] such firefighter's municipal employer or state employer
119 of the firefighters cancer relief account becoming insolvent, for
120 continuation of compensation.

121 (m) (1) Any [survivors] surviving dependents of a firefighter [that]
122 who has died from cancer and was receiving compensation [under] or
123 benefits or has applied for compensation or benefits under this section
124 may file a claim under chapter 568 within one year of such firefighter's
125 death. Until such claim is approved, such survivor shall continue to
126 receive benefits from the firefighters cancer relief account.

127 (2) If the [survivors] surviving dependents of a firefighter [that] who
128 has died from cancer and was receiving compensation [under] or
129 benefits or has applied for compensation or benefits under this section
130 do not file a claim under chapter 568 within one year of such firefighter's
131 death, such survivors may continue to receive benefits from the
132 firefighters cancer relief account.

133 Sec. 2. Section 31-278 of the general statutes is repealed and the
134 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

135 Each administrative law judge shall, for the purposes of this chapter
136 and section 7-313p, as amended by this act, have power to summon and
137 examine under oath such witnesses, and may direct the production of,
138 and examine or cause to be produced or examined, such books, records,
139 vouchers, memoranda, documents, letters, contracts or other papers in
140 relation to any matter at issue as he may find proper, and shall have the
141 same powers in reference thereto as are vested in magistrates taking
142 depositions and shall have the power to order depositions pursuant to
143 section 52-148. He shall have power to certify to official acts and shall

144 have all powers necessary to enable him to perform the duties imposed
 145 upon him by the provisions of this chapter and section 7-313p, as
 146 amended by this act. Each administrative law judge shall hear all claims
 147 and questions arising under this chapter and section 7-313p, as amended
 148 by this act, in the district to which the administrative law judge is
 149 assigned and all such claims shall be filed in the district in which the
 150 claim arises, provided, if it is uncertain in which district a claim arises,
 151 or if a claim arises out of several injuries or occupational diseases which
 152 occurred in one or more districts, the administrative law judge to whom
 153 the first request for hearing is made shall hear and determine such claim
 154 to the same extent as if it arose solely within his own district. If an
 155 administrative law judge is disqualified or temporarily incapacitated
 156 from hearing any matter, or if the parties shall so request and the
 157 chairperson of the Workers' Compensation Commission finds that it
 158 will facilitate a speedier disposition of the claim, he shall designate some
 159 other administrative law judge to hear and decide such matter. The
 160 Superior Court, on application of an administrative law judge or the
 161 chairperson or the Attorney General, may enforce, by appropriate
 162 decree or process, any provision of this chapter, section 7-313p, as
 163 amended by this act, or any proper order of an administrative law judge
 164 or the chairperson rendered pursuant to any such provision. Any
 165 administrative law judge, after ceasing to hold office as such
 166 administrative law judge, may settle and dispose of all matters relating
 167 to appealed cases, including correcting findings and certifying records,
 168 as well as any other unfinished matters pertaining to causes theretofore
 169 tried by him, to the same extent as if he were still such administrative
 170 law judge.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	October 1, 2025	7-313p
Sec. 2	October 1, 2025	31-278

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(d), "municipal or state employer" was changed to "municipal employer or state employer" for clarity and accuracy, and in

Section 1(f), "the provisions of" was added before "section 31-278" for consistency with standard drafting conventions.

LAB *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*