

Resolution No. 28

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: Health & Safety

Re: Toxic Chemicals in PPE

1 WHEREAS, cancer continues to be the leading
2 cause of death among firefighters; and
3 WHEREAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances
4 (PFAS) have been linked to cancer and other
5 illnesses; and
6 WHEREAS, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) was
7 proven in a court of law to be linked to testicular
8 cancer and many of the same illnesses which are
9 affecting firefighters at alarming rates; and
10 WHEREAS, the personal protective equipment
11 (PPE) industry voluntarily phased-out the use of
12 PFOA by 2016, but failed to alert firefighters of the
13 dangers associated with PFOA exposure; and
14 WHEREAS, the PPE industry has replaced PFOA
15 with other PFAS chemicals which have not yet been
16 adequately studied, but are also thought to be
17 harmful to human health and the environment by an
18 independent and impartial community of scientists;
19 and
20 WHEREAS, the PPE industry has long been
21 closely associated with the IAFF through
22 sponsorships and donations, while simultaneously
23 providing firefighters with products containing
24 unregulated toxic chemicals which may be
25 contributing to the firefighter cancer crisis; and
26 WHEREAS, it has been alleged that the PPE
27 industry has utilized biased science conducted by the

28 industry themselves, as well as distributing
29 misleading and incomplete statements and
30 documents which have obscured the facts uncovered
31 by independent scientists and activists; and

32 WHEREAS, the National Fire Protection
33 Association (NFPA) Technical Committee has the
34 authority to limit and/or eliminate the use of these
35 toxic chemicals, but has failed to do so; and

36 WHEREAS, all firefighters, regardless of
37 location, are affected equally by this issue, due to the
38 constant and unavoidable exposure to toxic PPE
39 which is intended to provide safety; therefore be it

40 RESOLVED, That the IAFF will no longer accept
41 sponsorships from the chemical industry, textile
42 manufacturers, or PPE manufacturers, who use toxic
43 chemicals in PPE ~~unless that~~
44 ~~money is used to directly replace turnout gear made~~
45 ~~with toxic chemicals~~ without alternatives which have
46 been independently studied and deemed non-toxic,
47 once those alternatives are available; and be it further

48 RESOLVED, That the IAFF recommends a stop
49 ~~will issue an~~
50 ~~advisory to the fire service in order to stop~~ the
51 practice of sending repurposing used and/or expired
52 PPE ~~to~~

53 ~~communities that are unable to purchase new gear~~
54 ~~and equipment and shall work to ensure that the~~
55 ~~firefighters in those communities are provided with~~
~~new and safe PPE through grants and other funding~~
~~provided by the PPE industry~~; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the IAFF ~~will issue an~~

56 ~~advisory-publish information~~ based on the
57 ~~recommendations-research~~ of
58 independent scientists, who have no affiliation to the
59 PPE or chemical manufacturing industry, to all
60 members ~~alerting-educating~~ them of the ~~known~~
61 ~~linksuspected link~~ between
62 PFAS chemicals and human illness, including cancer,
63 and will work in conjunction with the IAFF Division
64 of Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine
65 advising members on proper handling procedures of
66 their PFAS-containing gear; and be it further
67 RESOLVED, That the IAFF will ensure that the
68 health and safety of its members is placed above all
69 else, and will ensure that the IAFF Division of
70 Occupational Health, Safety and Medicine will
71 closely monitor the PPE industry and will utilize
72 independent and impartial science to ensure that the
73 fire service is provided with PPE that is not made
with chemicals that are hazardous to human health
and the environment.

Submitted by: IAFF Local 1314, Fall River
IAFF Local 2509, Nantucket

Cost Estimate: ~~6-0~~ cents

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt as Revised
CONVENTION ACTION:**

Resolution No. 30

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: Health & Safety

Re: Open Behavioral Health Center in Midwest

1 WHEREAS, in the course of doing their jobs,
2 firefighters are confronted with an array of horrors
3 few others can imagine, and the immediate and
4 cumulative impact of these experiences can result in
5 post-traumatic stress injuries as well as lead to
6 unhealthy or dangerous effects such as marital
7 problems, substance abuse and suicide; and

8 WHEREAS, in 2017, the International
9 Association of Fire Fighters opened the first-ever
10 behavioral health treatment facility specifically for
11 firefighters, the IAFF Center of Excellence for
12 Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery; and

13 WHEREAS, the International Association of Fire
14 Fighters will soon open their second behavioral
15 health treatment facility specifically for firefighters
16 located in California; and

17 WHEREAS, the IAFF Center of Excellence
18 provide focused and customized clinical treatment
19 and peer support tailored to the specific needs of first
20 responders and conducted in a familiar firehouse
21 environment; and

22 WHEREAS, the scope and breadth of incidents
23 faced by firefighters, as well as the large
24 concentration of IAFF members located within the
25 Midwest region, points to a substantial need for these
26 types of services directly within the Midwest; and

27 WHEREAS, the stigma of behavioral health is

28 dissipating, and trends have shown more IAFF
29 members seeking behavioral health than any other
30 time in our union's history; and

31 WHEREAS, the locations of the IAFF Center of
32 Excellence in Maryland and the soon to be
33 established IAFF Center of Excellence in California
34 leave a significant geographic barrier for Midwest
35 firefighters and other firefighters in need located
36 within the large gap between the East and West
37 coasts; therefore be it

38 RESOLVED, That the IAFF shall work with an
39 industry partner to conduct a feasibility study to
40 establish a third IAFF Center of Excellence within
41 the United States Midwest region; and be it further

42 RESOLVED, That such a Midwest IAFF
43 Behavioral Health Center should have clinical and
44 support resources that are, at a minimum, equivalent
45 to those provided through the IAFF Centers of
46 Excellence for Behavioral Health Treatment and
47 Recovery in Maryland and California.

Submitted by: IAFF Local 136, Dayton

Cost Estimate: None

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt as Revised
CONVENTION ACTION:**

Resolution No. 31

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: Health & Safety

Re: PFAS

1 WHEREAS, when firefighters engage in active
2 fire suppression activities, they know the dangers
3 associated with their job; and

4 WHEREAS, new research now suggests
5 firefighters are at risk before they ever leave the
6 firehouse just wearing their turnout gear; and

7 WHEREAS, medical evidence exists that proves
8 that firefighters face disproportionate rates of cancer
9 than the general public; and

10 WHEREAS, exposure to polyfluoroalkyl
11 substances, known as PFAS, has been proven to
12 increase the occurrence of cancers including
13 testicular, prostate, mesothelioma, and non-
14 Hodgkin’s lymphoma; and

15 WHEREAS, firefighting PPE manufacturers are
16 not required to disclose the chemicals used in the
17 manufacturing process; and

18 WHEREAS, studies have shown that PFAS in the
19 outer shell of firefighting PPE may be dislodged
20 when the material is manipulated, increasing the
21 concern of ingestion or inhalation; and

22 WHEREAS, University of Notre Dame
23 Experimental Nuclear Physics Professor Graham
24 Peaslee is testing new and used personal protective
25 gear issued through the 2000s for the presence of
26 perfluorinated alkyl substances; and

27 WHEREAS, Peaslee said the initial results from

28 tested PPE fabric swatches were “phenomenal,”
 29 “(The results were) off the scale in parts per million
 30 of fluorine in all but one of the samples,” he said and
 31 continued, “Everything was just loaded with
 32 fluorine.”; and

33 WHEREAS, his research is helping our members
 34 to learn more about how our turnout gear could be a
 35 major cause of occupational cancers; and

36 WHEREAS, current bunker gear manufacturers
 37 continue to deny the potential for any health
 38 problems created by their use of PFAS; therefore be
 39 it

40 RESOLVED, That the IAFF actively oppose the
 41 use of PFAS, ~~in any amount,~~ in the production of
 42 firefighting PPE; and be it further

43 RESOLVED, That the IAFF seek further
 44 independent testing of **all** PPE ensembles currently
 45 available to determine the levels of PFAS and the
 46 ability of the PFAS to penetrate the skin; and be it
 47 further

48 RESOLVED, That the IAFF meet with each
 49 manufacturer of firefighting PPE and ~~demand seek~~
 50 cooperation and assistance to immediately cease the
 51 use of PFAS in firefighting PPE, ~~and the IAFF shall~~
 52 ~~send a notice to each local affiliate, identifying any~~
 53 ~~and all manufacturers refusing to immediately cease~~
 54 ~~the use of PFAS~~; and be it further

55 RESOLVED, That the IAFF ~~meet with each~~
 56 ~~manufacturer of firefighting PPE and demand~~
 57 ~~cooperation and~~ apply for federal grant assistance to
 fund a study and data

58 collection of the negative health effects of PFAS in
59 firefighting PPE; and be it further
60 RESOLVED, That the IAFF Health and Safety
61 Committee give quarterly updates to the District Vice
62 Presidents so that information may be disseminated
63 to their local affiliates.

Submitted by: IAFF Local 765, Fort Lauderdale
IAFF Local 3080, Metro-Broward Professional
Fire Fighters
IAFF Local 1365, Orlando Professional Fire
Fighters

Cost Estimate: None

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt as Revised
CONVENTION ACTION:**