OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2026

FLORIDA FIREFIGHTERS
SAFETY AND HEALTH
COLLABORATIVE

Collaborative Connection

Welcome to the latest edition of the Collaborative Connection! We will continue to send a monthly newsletter on the last day of each month, but with our focus on both the current month and the one just ahead of us, so you don't miss a thing. With that in mind, we wanted to thank all of you that were able to join us at the FFCA Safety and Health Conference at Margaritaville Orlando Resort! It was a FANTASTIC conference with a lineup of incredible speakers that shared great information. The Margaritaville Resort is an awesome venue, and we'll be there again next year, so plan to join us if you can! This year, the FFCA and the Conference Planning Committee added a 5k Fun Run on Tuesday morning and scheduled Friends of Bill W meetings for those wanting to connect. We plan to continue both of these next year as well. So mark your calendars for October 18-20th, 2027!

In other important news, the Florida Firefighters Safety & Health Collaborative (FFSHC) is collaborating with representatives from across the fire service and **University of Miami** researcher Dr. Barbara Millet and her team on PFAS-free turnout gear. These focus group discussions will explore the benefits and challenges of adoption, including gear performance and training needs, and help develop education surrounding this topic for the Florida Fire Service and beyond, By bringing together departments at different stages of adoption, this effort will support informed decisions that advance firefighter safety and health.
Stay tuned for more information!

Keep reading for all the latest news, photos from the conference, and more!

Safety and Health Conference

Margaritaville Resort Orlando

5k Fun Run on Tuesday brought over 30 people out for an early morning walk or run around the beautiful resort property!

Full house for a great lineup of presentations

Representing!

FLORIDA FIREFIGHTERS SAFETY AND HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

Mental Health & Wellness

Tools to Cope, Reset, and Recharge

First Responders face unique stressors, from high-pressure emergency responses to difficult calls and disrupted sleep. While we cannot always control what we experience on the job, we can build healthy coping tools to help manage stress, reset our minds, and protect our overall well-being.
Small habits can make a big difference. Try incorporating these practical tools into your daily routine:

- Pause and breathe. Take a few slow, controlled breaths to help calm your body and refocus when stress begins to build.
- Move your body. Exercise, stretching, or taking a short walk can help release tension and improve your mood.
- Talk it out. Connect with a trusted teammate, family member, peer supporter, or mental health professional. You do not have to carry everything alone.
- Protect your recovery time. Prioritize sleep, hydration, balanced nutrition, and time away from work to help your body and mind recharge.
- Stay present. Try grounding techniques when your thoughts feel overwhelming. Notice five things you see, four things you feel, and three things you hear to bring your attention back to the present.
- Recognize your warning signs. Irritability, withdrawing from others, trouble sleeping, or feeling constantly on edge may signal that it is time to slow down and seek support.
- Check on your crew. A simple conversation or genuine check-in can remind someone they are not alone.
-

Remember, coping tools are not one-size-fits-all. Find what works for you, practice it regularly, and reach out for additional support when needed.

Being mission-ready means taking care of yourself, too. We train to respond to emergencies and protect our communities.

Let's make our own mental health and wellness part of that same commitment.

NATIONAL
FIRST RESPONDERS DAY
OCTOBER 28
HONORING THOSE WHO ANSWER THE CALL.
FLORIDA
SAFETY
FIREFIGHTERS
HEALTH
SAFETY AND HEALTH
COLLABORATIVE

CHAPLAIN JOE'S MESSAGE

Heroes and Sidekicks

Movies, books, and comics have given us some larger-than-life heroes. Luke Skywalker. Captain America. Mario the Plumber. When the situation seems hopeless, these characters arrive on the scene to bring order out of chaos. They help, heal, and save the world.

First responders operate in this world as heroes. While it's a title you reject, the truth is that's how the rest of us look at you. You are bold, strong, confident. You are problem-solvers and risk-takers. You help, heal, and save the world. But like every good hero, you have those that work alongside you; those that fill the role of sidekick.

Think for a moment about some well-known heroes and sidekicks: Frodo Baggins and Samwise Gamgee, Batman and Robin, Kirk and Spock. Samwise carried Frodo on his adventurous journey. Robin prevented Batman from becoming too dark in his ways. Spock balanced Kirk's passion with logic.

It's the sidekick that generally sees the big picture and helps keep the hero focused on the task at hand. It's the sidekick that stays emotionally calm and helps the hero sort through their struggles. It's the sidekick that brings out the depth of the hero's character and helps us to see them for who they really are.

For the first responder, I believe your family plays the role of sidekick. Your family provides you with support, perspective, and commitment so you can be successful in your role as hero. They help balance your work and home life. They offer unconditional love and acceptance.

While heroes are the ones in the spotlight, they wouldn't be successful without the faithful, steadfast presence of their trusted partners. Sidekicks might not get noticed much, but the story wouldn't be the same without them.

CISM Training

Assisting Individuals in Crisis and Group Crisis Intervention

Kissimmee, FL-December 8-10, 2026

Sarasota, FL - January 26-28, 2027

Contact us to host a training at your agency

For more information and to register visit

www.fireresuesupport.com

Chaplain Joe LaCognata, Instructor

Coming Up in November

Florida Fallen Firefighter Memorial Service & Prayer Breakfast

November 20, 2026
8:30 a.m. Prayer Breakfast
9:45 a.m. Service

At the
Florida State Fire College
11655 N.W. Gainesville Rd
Ocala, FL 34482

Ocala Downtown Square Remembrance Parade

November 19, 2026
7:00 p.m.

October Recap

True every day, not just on October 10th. Please remember there is help right now, today, and always.

FLORIDA FIREFIGHTERS SAFETY AND HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

Recognizing Breast (and other) Cancer Awareness Month in October and Men's Health in November

Grow a mustache. Start a conversation. Make your health a priority.

This November, we're participating in Movember to raise awareness of men's health—including prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and mental health.

Mustaches may get the attention, but taking care of yourself is what matters most. Whether you grow one or not, let Movember be your reminder to check in on your health.

Your Health Deserves a Place on Your Calendar.

Been putting off an appointment? Have a question you've been meaning to ask?

Take the next step this Movember.

FLORIDA FIREFIGHTERS SAFETY AND HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

10 YEARS OF SERVICE.
ONE MISSION: STRONGER TOGETHER.

HONORING A DECADE OF FIREFIGHTER SAFETY, HEALTH, AND WELLNESS.

CANCER
Exposure and inflammation take a long-term toll.

MENTAL HEALTH
Chronic stress, poor sleep, and burnout impact your mind and your mission.

ON-THE-JOB INJURIES
Reduced strength, mobility, and endurance increase your risk.

OBESITY
Poor nutrition and inactivity lead to serious, preventable health issues.

FIREFIGHTER SAFETY | HEALTH AND FITNESS
10 YEARS
2016-2026
FFSHC
CANCER PREVENTION | MENTAL WELLNESS

10 YEAR COMMEMORATIVE COLLECTOR'S COIN

A SPECIAL RELEASE FOR OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY!

PURCHASE TWO OR MORE AT $20 EACH!

CONFERENCE PRICE **$25** EACH

— YOUR HEALTH IS YOUR GREATEST INVESTMENT. —

STRONGER BODY
Perform better. Prevent injuries.

STRONGER MIND
Reduce stress. Build resilience.

STRONGER HEART
Lower risk. Live longer.

STRONGER BROTHERHOOD
Support each other. Get home together.

STRONGER FUTURE
Protect your career. Protect your family.

BE FIT. BE RESILIENT. BE READY. THAT'S HOW WE SERVE.

FFSHC Challenge Coins

Scan to Order

SAFETY AND HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

FIREFIGHTER SAFETY. HEALTH. FITNESS. MENTAL WELLNESS. CANCER PREVENTION.

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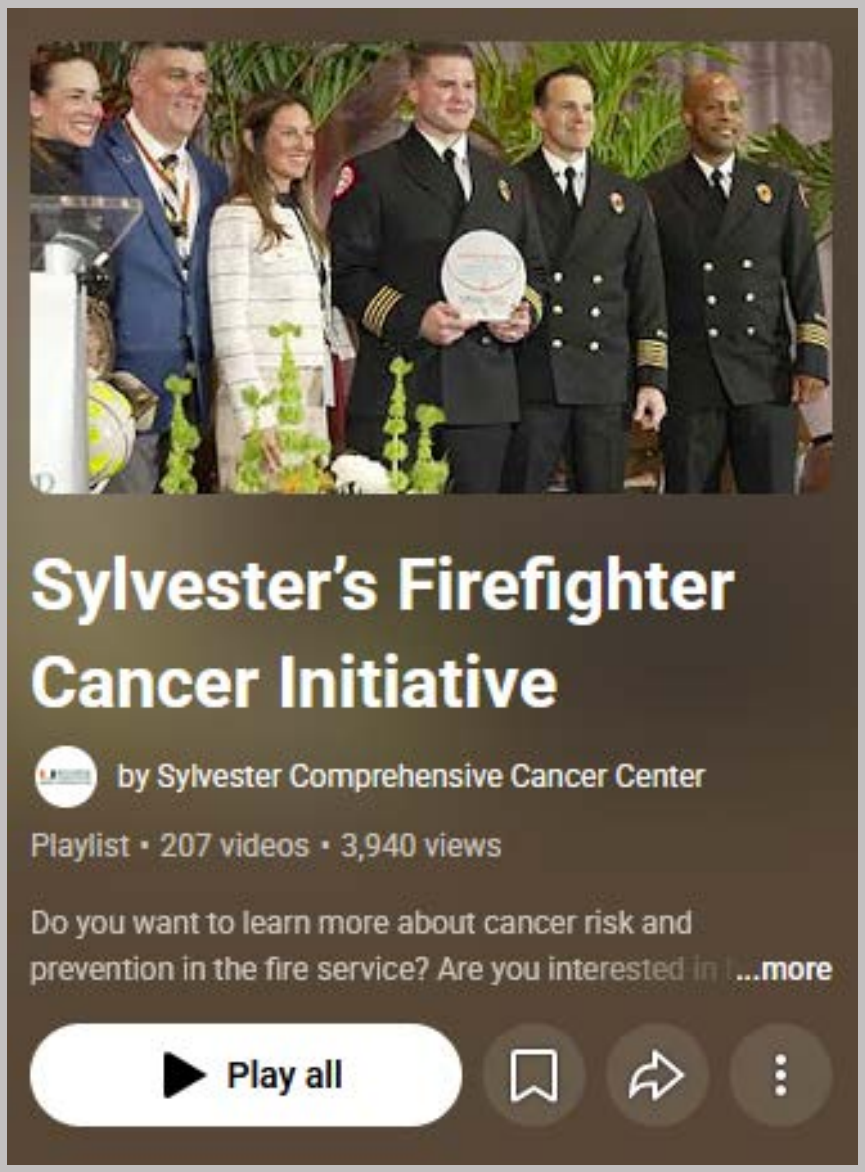
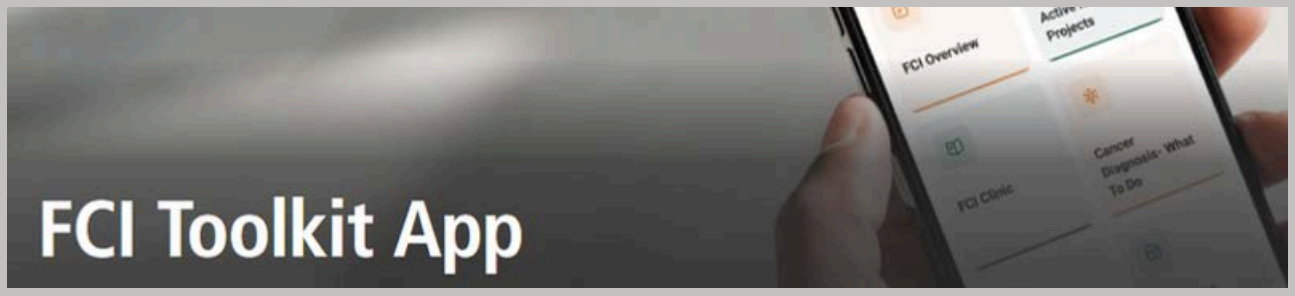
FCI Research

Did you know you can go back and watch past FCI seminars?
Click on the picture to check out their YouTube channel for all of their videos:



FCI Links

https://umiamihealth.org/en/Sylvester-Comprehensive-Cancer-Center/Research/Firefighter-Cancer-Initiative/Research-Initiatives/Personal-Exposure-Reporter



https://umiamihealth.org/en/sylvester-comprehensive-cancer-center/research/firefighter-cancer-initiative/cancer-prevention-and-educational-curriculum/fci-toolkit-app

To learn more please call 305-243-FIRE and select option 4.

https://umiamihealth.org/en/sylvester-comprehensive-cancer-center/research/firefighter-cancer-initiative/fci-clinical-care,-navigation,-and-survivorship-care

COMING UP IN 2027

https://www.flfireems.com

COMING UP IN 2027

Update your Calendars with the New Date!

FLORIDA FIREFIGHTERS SAFETY AND HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

COMING UP IN 2027

STAND TOGETHER

JOINTHE NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER REGISTRY (NFR)FOR CANCER

Answer the call. Join your brothers and sisters in a new effort to understand and reduce cancer.

What is NIOSH?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is the part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) responsible for conducting research and making recommendations to reduce workplace illness and injury. NIOSH has a long history of working with the fire service and is committed to firefighter health and safety through investigating line of duty deaths, job hazards, cancer and other illnesses.

What is the NFR for Cancer?

The NFR is the largest existing effort undertaken to understand and reduce cancer among U.S. firefighters. In 2018, Congress passed the **Firefighter Cancer Registry Act**. This Act directed NIOSH to develop a voluntary registry of firefighters to better understand the link between firefighting and cancer.

Why was the NFR for Cancer created?

Studies have shown that firefighters may have a greater risk for some types of cancer due to their exposure to smoke and hazardous chemicals on the fireground.1, 2, 3 Many of these studies did not include volunteer firefighters or enough women or firefighters from some racial and ethnic groups to make strong conclusions about their cancer risk. The NFR will include members of these groups to better understand the connection between firefighting activities and cancer among all U.S. firefighters.

How do I join?

Registration will take place through a secure website and will take about 30 minutes. When joining, you will provide information about yourself – name, date of birth, and some basic information about your work exposures, health, and lifestyle.

WHO CAN REGISTER FOR THE NFR?

All U.S. firefighters, with or without cancer, no matter their length of service. This includes:

- Active and retired firefighters
- Career, paid-on-call, and volunteer firefighters
- Structural firefighters
- Wildland firefighters
- Instructors
- Fire investigators
- Other fire service members

Having all types of firefighters join the NFR is vital to examining the relationship between firefighting and cancer. Participation is voluntary.

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER REGISTRY for Cancer
NFR
Understanding & Reducing Cancer
JOIN THE NFR

FIREFIGHTER LIFESTYLE & HEALTH

CRACKYL

MAGAZINE

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE OUR NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH CRACKYL MAGAZINE! IF YOU HAVEN'T CHECKED IT OUT YET, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR!?
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS AWESOME FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND WELLNESS MAGAZINE THAT ALIGNS WITH OUR FFSHC MISSION, CLICK ON THE LINK.

CRACKYL MAGAZINE - FIREFIGHTER LIFESTYLE, HEALTH AND FITNESS MAGAZINE

United Way

AS YOU ESTABLISH YOUR ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED WAY EACH YEAR, WHY NOT SELECT THE FLORIDA FIREFIGHTERS SAFETY AND HEALTH COLLABORATIVE TO BE THE RECIPIENT OF YOUR UNITED WAY CONTRIBUTIONS?

CONTACT TINA O'BRIEN IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE.

TOBRIEN@FLORIDAFIREFIGHTERSAFETY.ORG

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WEBSTORE

WWW.MYSEACOAST.COM

1). Locate your store by typing in the website in your browser.
www.myseacoast.com
or click anywhere on this document to be directly routed there.

2). Scroll down until you see the 'FL Firefighter Safety' logo.
Click on the logo to ACCESS the FL Firefighter Safety store.

3). Login to your account from the top right corner of your screen.
(If you do not have an account setup you can set one up here too).

4. Start Shopping!

FOR ALL QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT US:
CUSTOMER SUCCESS MANAGER - NICOLE PAUL-HAUS
(561) 439-8005 x108 • Nicole@seacoastuniforms.com

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