

**IAFF 55<sup>th</sup> Convention**  
**Resolution 28 – TOXIC CHEMICALS IN PPE**

**The virtual 55th IAFF Convention begins on January 25, 2021.**

**Resolution 28** will provide firefighters with safer alternatives for personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure that PPE is not made with PFAS chemicals that threaten the health of firefighters and the communities they work in.

**The chemical industry has known of the harm associated with PFAS exposure for decades.**

- They have a clear track record of hiding the evidence of that harm, including the impact on their own employees.
- **DuPont has been aware**, since at least the 1960s, that PFAS were accumulating in the blood of their workers and causing illness.
- They hid those discoveries from their employees and the world as they, & others, continued to produce PFAS.
- **PFAS has now been found in the blood of nearly every human on earth.**

How could any of us truly believe that DuPont 3M and other billion-dollar companies would put our lives ahead of their profit? **Take a look at what they say when under oath before Congress.**

**In his recently released study, Dr. Graham Peaslee found that every set of turnout gear he tested, whether new, old, used, or unused, contained high levels of PFAS.**

Every firefighter wearing turnout gear that meets the NFPA 1971 standard is exposed to these chemicals every time they touch or wear their gear. Studies have also found that the PFAS sheds from the fabric and is found in fire station dust, likely presenting an inhalation hazard.

**PFOA** is also known as C8 and refers to PFAS with a backbone of 8 carbons. PFAS is also known as C6, with 6 carbons.

While it is true that PFOA was partially phased out, in order to do that, the industry simply changed a few atoms and now uses C6 in its place.

Because C6 is not quite as effective as C8, they use more of it to continue to get the desired effects. They will tell us that C6 is perfectly safe, but there are many who disagree.

**Replacement chemicals may be *different*, but that fact alone is clearly not a testament to their safety.**

**50 Years of Deception: A Timeline of Companies Hiding Health Risks of PFAS**

**1956**

Stanford University study finds that PFAS binds to proteins in human blood.

**1965**

DuPont rat study shows liver damage and increased spleen size.

**1978**

3M concludes that PFOS and PFOA, a PFAS chemical used to make DuPont's Teflon, "should be regarded as toxic."

**1989**

3M study finds elevated cancer rates among PFAS workers.



One PFOA replacement, PFBA, was recently found to accumulate in the lungs. The industry has touted the safety of replacement PFAS like PFBA because they exit the bloodstream faster than PFOA but now we are learning that while PFBA leaves the bloodstream in just days, compared to years, it will accumulate in the lungs and is associated with **more severe cases of COVID19.**

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**According to the IAFF Line of Duty Death database, in 2019,  
140 of the 185 line of duty deaths (75%) were due to cancer.**

The [IAFF 2018 Cancer Summit](#) was held two years after the voluntary partial phase out of PFOA.

- In May of 2017, the IAFF released a statement stating that PFOA "...did not pose a risk to end-users."
- This information came directly from communication with a manufacturer and via "personal communication" as the document citations show.
- The IAFF basing their position on information from the people who sell these chemicals was shortsighted and is a clear justification for why independent and unbiased science should be the only acceptable source of such important information.



**These manufacturers, who are our frequent sponsors and advertisers, are also the same companies currently being sued by IAFF members in California for damages due to PFAS exposure from their turnout gear which they allege has caused their cancer, as seen [here](#).**

The industry has billions of dollars at their disposal and with the ability to spend those billions on "**rented white coats who defend toxic chemicals**", they will surely continue to produce false science to counter the legitimate.

Unfortunately, in the United States, the burden to prove toxicity of such chemicals falls on the shoulders of the public and those who have been sickened and infected.

**In the EU, chemicals are guilty until proven innocent. In the US, it is the opposite.**

**The purpose of the IAFF is to support and protect its members.**

Firefighting PPE is extremely important to the health and safety of firefighters and as such the IAFF should eliminate any **appearance of conflict** related to accepting advertisements and sponsorships from an industry that should instead be scrutinized to ensure the lives of firefighters are not sacrificed for their profit.

**The goal of this resolution is to ensure our brother and sister firefighters have the information to better understand the chemicals in their PPE, while also ensuring efforts are made to provide them with safer alternatives in the future.**

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