

HB 716 -- WORKERS COMPENSATION

SPONSOR: Schroer

Currently, the law provides that certain diseases of the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, including carcinoma, may be recognized as occupational diseases if a paid firefighter is exposed to certain substances. This bill includes volunteer firefighters, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians in this definition of occupational disease. Mental disorders may also qualify as an occupational disease.

The bill also provides for a rebuttable presumption that a paid or volunteer firefighter, paramedic, or emergency medical technician who contracts certain diseases, including cancer, has a compensable occupational disease under specified circumstances. A rebuttable presumption is created when a paid or volunteer firefighter, paramedic, emergency medical technician, or police officer who is diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental disorder is eligible for compensation under specified circumstances. The presumption arises if a firefighter, paramedic, or emergency medical technician is diagnosed with carcinoma and was exposed to a known or probable carcinogen and has been assigned to at least five years of hazardous duty.

The bill also requires the Division of Workers Compensation to prepare a biannual report containing specified information about presumed cancer claims filed under the provisions of this bill. This report shall be submitted to the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the President Pro Tem of the Senate, and others specified in the bill.

This bill is similar to HB 1647 (2018) and HB 482 (2017).