

# Firefighters risk their lives when responding to emergencies

Firefighters in Pennsylvania face many risks while working. Firefighters have to work in very hazardous conditions that increase the chances of suffering a serious or fatal workplace injury. The dangers of being a firefighter are pretty well-known. That is why it may surprise many people to hear that traffic accidents are a serious safety hazards for firefighters.

Smoke inhalation, burns and other physical injuries are common safety hazards for firefighters. However, a new report shows that firefighters also face risks for injury or death when responding to and returning from calls. The United States Fire Administration reported that roughly 25 percent of on-duty firefighter deaths happen when they are going to and returning from an emergency.

The most common cause of fatalities during these times is due to their emergency vehicle getting into an accident on the road, according to the report. The USFA has been trying to improve safety efforts for firefighters and other emergency responders because traffic accidents involving fire engines and ambulances happen more than you think.

Many of these vehicle collisions can be very dangerous for firefighters, especially for those in the back who may not be strapped in with a seat belt or they may have equipment and other objects flying throughout the vehicle during an accident.

USFA and other safety agencies are hoping new efforts can help prevent accidents and fatalities during emergency responses in Pennsylvania and throughout the United States. The

administration's new report includes information about the importance of regulating emergency vehicles and how responders operate vehicles on the road. The report also looks at how the design and maintenance of the vehicle may be able to improve safety for firefighters and emergency responders.

Hopefully improvements will be made to keep firefighters safe when traveling to and from emergencies because nothing is more tragic than firefighters losing their lives as a result of their efforts to save countless other lives.

**Source:** Occupational Health & Safety, "[USFA Releases Report on Emergency Vehicle Safety](#)," March 7, 2014