

EVALUATION OF ANTIMONY AND MERCURY EXPOSURE IN FIREFIGHTERS

On October 24, 2008, NIOSH received an HHE (Health Hazard Evaluation) request from the Fire Chief of BRFRS (Boca Raton Fire Rescue services) regarding antimony exposure among firefighters. The concern began with one firefighter who had been experiencing unexplained neurologic symptoms, including hoarseness, weakness, and numbness, since October 2007. He had seen multiple physicians, but no diagnosis was made. In July 2008, the firefighter sought the care of a holistic medicine physician who performed heavy metals testing on a hair sample through a commercial laboratory. This test revealed an elevated level of antimony.

The HHE Program evaluated firefighters' potential exposure to antimony through station uniform pants made of FireWear® fabric. Investigators found that wearing pants made from FireWear® fabric did not pose a health hazard from antimony exposure. Investigators recommended that fire departments continue to issue station uniforms that comply with the National Fire Protection Association 1975 standard.

To download the complete report, click the following link:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2009-0025-0076-3085.pdf>



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