

Injury Fact Sheet

Firefighters and Medics



Falls from Vehicles

Firefighters and medics are being seriously injured by falling from their vehicles



The injuries from these accidents were so serious, the workers had to take time off from work or in some cases were permanently disabled. These serious injuries are costly and affect your industrial insurance premiums. They contribute to the reason for the average base rate of \$0.79 per hour per employee paid by county and city fire departments. A fire department with ten full-time employees with an average rate of injuries (claims) would pay approximately \$16,000 in premiums in 2006. If your company has a higher than average number of injuries, your "experience rating" could increase by 25% and your premiums would increase to \$0.98 per hour per employee. In a year, that would be an increase of \$4,000 to \$20,000 for ten full time employees.

Causes of fall injuries



In 5 years, 16 firefighters or medics suffered injuries serious enough to lose time from work, because of experiencing a fall from their fire truck or ambulance. The fire truck or ambulance was not moving at the time of the fall. The most common injuries were strains, sprains, tears and fractures, involving the back, neck, knee, ankle or wrist.

The most common causes of fall injuries are from falling from the vehicles when entering or exiting the cab. The method of entering and exiting and the condition of the stepping surfaces play an important role in the causes.

Ways to prevent fall injuries

- When entering or exiting the cab of a vehicle, use the three-point rule which requires either two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand to be in contact with the vehicle at all times.
- Always use the mounting handles and the stepping surfaces designed for the purpose of entering and exiting.
- Slip resistant soles and heels on shoes help with traction. Also, make sure the stepping surfaces and your shoes are free of mud, ice and oil.
- Add anti-skid materials to steps.
- Be especially cautious in wet conditions.
- Consider the use of auxiliary portable steps.
- Get help carrying loads in and out of vehicle
- As much as practicable, try to perform work on even ground.

