



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado’s Legislature

SB 26-184: FIREFIGHTER CANCER BENEFITS & WORKERS' COMP

Prime Sponsors:
Sen. Rodriguez

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Published for: Senate Second Reading
Drafting number: LLS 26-0714

Version: First Revised Note
Date: May 6, 2026

Fiscal note status: The fiscal note reflects the introduced bill, as amended by the Senate Business, Labor, and Technology Committee.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill creates a legal presumption that certain types of cancers are a result of a firefighter’s employment or service and confers eligibility for workers’ compensation.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- Minimal State Workload
- Local Government

Appropriations. No appropriation is required.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$0	\$0
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

In workers' compensation claims, certain cancers contracted by firefighters are considered occupational diseases, and presumed to be a result of the firefighters' employment. This bill expands the types of cancer that are presumed to be occupational diseases, and extends the presumption to include neurological disease. A local government employer may rebut the presumption with medical evidence that:

- the condition is preexisting and the claimant intentionally falsified information during hiring; or,
- the condition was caused solely by a nonoccupational circumstance and is unrelated to the claimant's service as a firefighter; however, a claimant's tobacco use, genetic predisposition, family history, or failure to obtain proper health screening is not sufficient evidence alone to rebut the presumption.

The bill applies to firefighters with at least five years of cumulative full- or part-time employment or volunteer service; however, the requirements do not apply to a firefighter employed by the state. A retired firefighter is also covered for up to ten years after employment, one year of coverage for each year of the person's employed service.

The bill repeals the exclusion to these requirements that currently exists for employers participating in the firefighter cancer benefits program, a multiple employer health trust.

State Expenditures

Workload in the Department of Labor and Employment to implement the bill and perform any necessary rulemaking. No change in appropriations is required.

Local Government

The bill increases workers' compensation costs for cities, special districts, and other local governments that employ firefighters. For local governments that self-insure or currently rely on multi-employer trusts for coverage, adding an immediate presumption of occupational diseases and extending the duration of coverage will result in higher premiums and may result in stricter underwriting for policies. Increasing the number of complex claims will also increase local government costs for legal services to navigate cases and resolve disputes. Similar to the state, these costs are assumed to be about \$1 million per claim, including benefits and medical expenses.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed, and applies to claims received on or after that date.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties

Pinnacol Assurance

Law

Public Safety

Municipalities

Special District Association

Personnel