

## Health of first responders exposed during the Fort McMurray fires of May 2016

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**Who is doing the study?** This study is being carried out by investigators at the University of Alberta

**Why are we doing the study?** There is concern that exposure to the fires and intense smoke in Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo since May 2<sup>nd</sup> may have the potential to affect the health of first responders deployed to the area of the fires. The health and respiratory assessment we are doing now is to establish if there are any health problems that may have resulted from your deployment.

**Why have I been chosen?** Any first responder from a participating emergency response agency who was deployed since May 2<sup>nd</sup> is eligible to be in this phase of the study.

**What would I have to do if I took part?** We would ask you first to read then sign the on-line form consenting to fill in an exposure and health questionnaire. The questionnaire asks about your tasks and exposures while you were in Fort McMurray and about your health now and in the past. It may be that you have undergone lung function (breathing) tests as part of health monitoring since you got back from Fort McMurray, and if you have, we will ask your consent to access that record. If you have had any tests of lung function as part of health monitoring before you went to Fort McMurray, we will ask your consent to access these results as well, as this will give us the best possible assessment of any lung deficits that may have resulted from your deployment. We will also ask for your consent to follow-up your health through the Alberta Health administrative databases. This will help us to identify whether there are any longer term impacts on the health of those deployed to Fort McMurray. We will not see your full medical record, only basic information about dates and times of any health services provided to you. Finally we will ask for your consent to contact you again as part of studies of Fort McMurray fire fighters that are planned going forward. For this it would be most helpful to have an email address and phone number where we can contact you.

**What about confidentiality?** The results will be confidential to the University team and your individual results will not be shared with your employer or with anyone outside the research team unless you specifically request this in writing at some later date: they will be securely stored for at least 5 years within the Division of Preventive Medicine. A final report will be made available to you, to participating emergency response agencies, to Alberta Workplace Health and Safety and to the unions but this will not identify any individual results.

**Do I have to take part?** Participation in this study is voluntary and you do not have to take part if you do not wish to do so. Whether you take part or not will have no effect on your employment, on your current or future medical care or any injury compensation claim.

**Could any benefit come from this study?** There will be no direct benefit to you from taking part in the study. If the study identifies exposure factors associated with poor health in the days and months following deployment, this information is likely to result in changes to reduce the risk of health effects from future deployments.

**Could any harm come to me from taking part in this study?** Completion of the questionnaire carries very little risk. Whether you agree or not will not affect your employment, your medical care or injury claims in any way, now or in the future. If you later decide you want the information you have given destroyed, we will do so if the request is received within 12 months of today.

**Where can I find out more?** If you have questions you can email us at [FMacFire@ualberta.ca](mailto:FMacFire@ualberta.ca) or phone us on the toll-free number 1-866-492-6093. If it is out of office hours please leave a voice message and we will get back to you very quickly. You can also write to the above address.

**What do I do next?** First we would ask that you read and complete the consent form.

**Whom do I contact if I have concerns about the way the study is being conducted?** The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492 2615.