



City of Mansfield

Tim Theaker, Mayor



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Steven J. Strickling, Chief of Fire

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PRESS RELEASE

The Mansfield Fire Department (MFD) recently was awarded \$15,000 in grant funds from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) for the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment. The BWC uses the Firefighter Exposure to Environmental Elements Grant (FEEEG) Program to partner with Ohio fire departments to minimize exposure to dangerous carcinogenic particulates and other harmful contaminants. The program is available to eligible Ohio fire departments who wish to purchase qualified items for optimal protection against these exposures.

In total, through the grant, the MFD will receive 100 particulate blocking hoods. The hoods are designed to keep potentially carcinogenic particulates and other harmful contaminants off of firefighters' jaws, faces, and necks; areas identified as highly absorptive and more permeable than other areas of skin, and are likely not getting enough protection from hazardous particles with the current knit hood technology that is currently available.

Additionally, MFD will receive 100 washable gloves, these structural firefighter gloves along with the hoods meet the requirements of the latest standards of the National Fire Protection Association.

The grant requires a local financial match from the fire department of \$3,000.

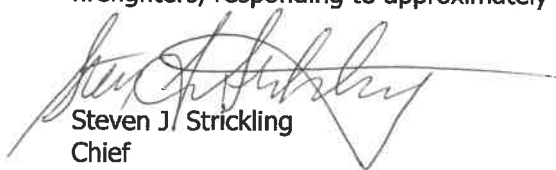
"According to the NFPA, firefighters face a 9 percent increase in cancer diagnoses. The enhanced protective clothing that this grant funds will help protect our firefighters," said Mansfield Fire Department Chief Steve Strickling.

This grant will work in conjunction with the department's current policy of protecting firefighters by washing contaminated gear in a large "extractor," an industrial washing machine. This extractor allows all clothing to be cleaned before the next shift. Also, firefighters are carrying wet wipes on their trucks, to remove as much soot as possible from their faces, necks, and hands before they leave a fire scene.

"Cancer is a leading threat to firefighter health, as recognized by Ohio's new firefighter-cancer presumption law," said Mansfield Firefighter Shawn Yerian, who wrote the grant for the hoods and gloves. "We are grateful for the BWC grant that has allowed us to purchase protective clothing that blocks carcinogens, minimizing health impacts."

As of February 28, the FEEEG Program has awarded 199 grants totaling \$2 million with nearly 250 additional grants pending. The program is entering its second year with a funding level of \$2 million.

The Mansfield Fire Department operates from five fire stations. The department is made up of 92 firefighters, responding to approximately 11,000 calls a year.


Steven J. Strickling
Chief