

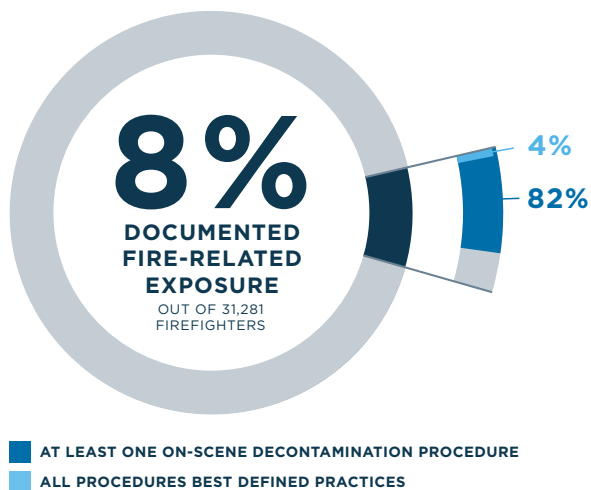


**RESEARCH  
ROUNDTABLE**

# The Importance of Firefighter Decontamination Procedures

In 2023, the study [“Evaluating Firefighter On-Scene Decontamination Practices Using a National Fire Records Management System.”](#) utilized information from the ESO Data Collaborative to analyze how frequently firefighters carry out on-scene decontamination procedures after working fires.

The study reviewed records from the ESO Data Collaborative national research database from January 1 to December 31, 2021, examining how often firefighters carry out and record on-scene decontamination procedures after working fires with documented exposure to smoke or products of combustion. The characteristics of those incidents were also evaluated.



The research found that fire personnel may not be taking all recommended decontamination post-working fires. Out of the 31,281 firefighters included in the study, 8.0% documented fire-related exposure. 82% of those who documented exposure performed at least one on-scene decontamination procedure, but only 4% documented all on-scene decontamination procedures defined as best practices. The odds of documenting any procedures were significantly decreased among firefighters responding to incidents in rural areas compared with urban areas.

To read the full research or companion white paper [click here](#).

➔ **Want to learn more?**

Read the [Lavender Report](#) and the [Fire Decontamination White Paper](#).



[Lavender Report](#)



[Fire Decontamination](#)

## REFLECT

Considering the prevalence of cancer within the industry, performing and documenting all decontamination procedures is of the utmost importance and should be prioritized, both in training and in day-to-day operations. To open up a discussion with your team on improving practices within your department and aligning your organization to reduce firefighters' exposure to carcinogens, here are some guiding questions to steer the conversation:

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- 1 Do you know a firefighter who was diagnosed with cancer?  
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- 2 Do you know the department's policy for on-scene decontamination after a working fire?  
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- 3 What challenges or gaps in on-scene decontamination procedures stand out to you? How can we improve overall firefighter safety?  
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- 4 What cultural shifts or training initiatives do you think could improve on-scene documentation practices?  
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- 5 What strategies can we implement to encourage consistent adherence to recommended on-scene decontamination procedures?  
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- 6 The [Lavender Report](#) outlines 11 best practices for preventing cancer. How many of these do you follow? How can we ensure that they are consistently adhered to?  
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- 7 **For departments in rural areas:** What tailored approaches can you adopt to ensure that decontamination practices are consistently followed, regardless of location and resources?  
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[Lavender Report](#)

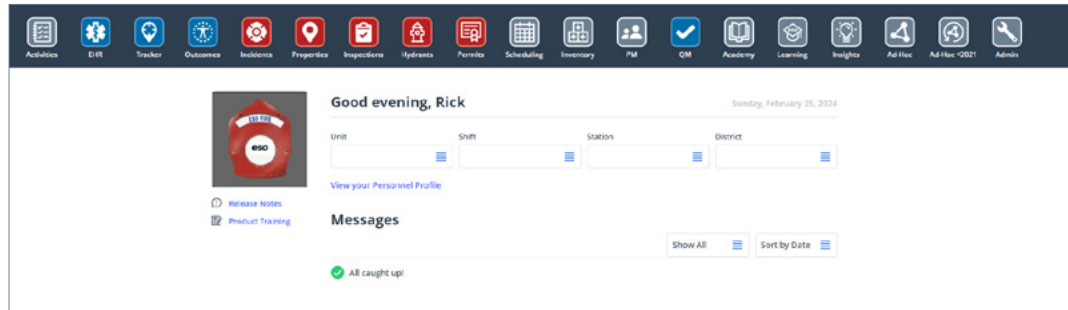


[Fire Decontamination](#)

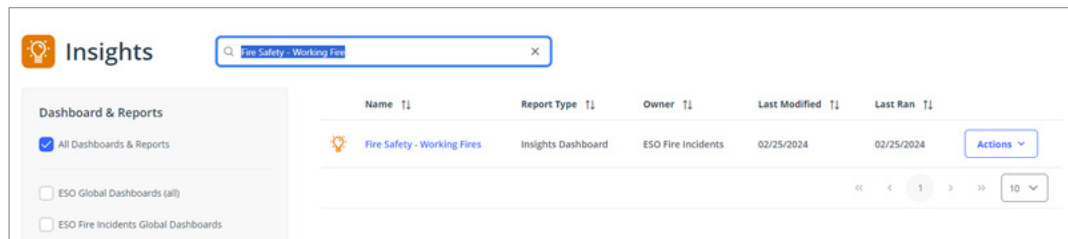
## SEE WHERE YOU STAND

If you're an ESO customer, you can see how your department compares directly in the [Insights Dashboard](#).

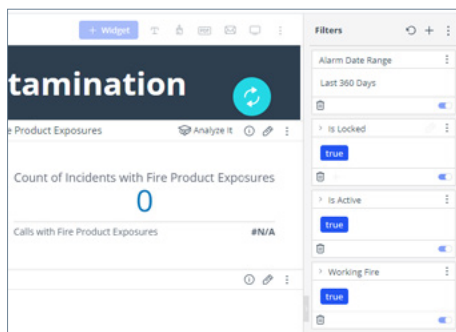
**Step 1:** Head to your ESO Dashboard and click on Insights



**Step 2:** Search “Fire Safety – Working Fires” and click the report



**Step 3:** Adjust your date range to “Last 360 Days” by clicking the pencil and updating it using the arrows.



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