



December 2016

What is FIREWELL?

FIRE-WELL: Firefighter Illness Remediation Enterprise: Work-Accommodations for Enabled Life & Livelihood

Sponsors:



SSHRC CRSH

Project Leaders:

- Rob D'Amico
- Joy MacDermid
- Kathryn Sinden

Partners:

- Hamilton Professional Firefighters Association
- Hamilton Fire Department
- Dartfish Canada
- Organizational Solutions Inc.

Collaborators:

- Veronica Jamnik
- Mike Pysklywec
- Liz Scott
- Susan Stock

Coordinating Centre:

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Season's Greetings!



Thank you all for your contributions to FIREWELL this year. We welcome all feedback on our process and future directions in firefighter safety research. We look forward to continue working with you in 2017!

Key Messages

Our objectives for Phase 1 of the Partnership Development Grant are to:

- 1) Build the FIREWELL partnership into a larger, more diverse, more national, group of researchers, firefighters and stakeholders that are committed to optimizing firefighter work participation.
- 2) Identify the key knowledge, existing resources and innovations that can be leveraged.
- 3) Establish firefighters' priority needs and research questions.
- 4) Develop and pilot test promising work participation interventions for Phase 2.
- 5) Establish increased capacity in qualified individuals engaging in firefighter research.

Updates

Partnerships (Objective 1)

Since our start-up meeting in the summer, we have been busy reaching out to potential partners and collaborators representing different geographical locations who have interests and experience in conducting firefighter research.

We would like to welcome the following organizations and individuals to the FIREWELL team:

Partners:

- Thunder Bay Fire Rescue

Collaborators:

- Ms. Amanda Brazil (Volunteer Firefighter, Crossroads Fire Department & PhD Trainee, University of Prince Edward Island)

Potential Partnerships (talks in progress)

- Newfoundland Professional Firefighters Association
- Montreal Professional Firefighters Association
- Fire Service Women Ontario
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- Centre for Research in Occupational Safety & Healthy
- Dr. David Frost (Assistant Professor, Kinesiology, University of Toronto)
- Dr. Heather Carnahan (Dean, Human Kinetics and Recreation, Memorial University of Newfoundland)

Next Steps: We are still accepting partners and collaborators. If you have suggestions of other potential partners or collaborators, please let us know.

Environmental Scan (Objective 2)

As part of our efforts to catalog all best practices in prevention and disability management for firefighters, we have initiated a comprehensive search of all the Canadian firefighter websites and extracting info such as:

- Physical health programs
- Mental health programs
- Workplace safety programs
- Ergonomic/injury prevention programs
- Work accommodation
- Return to work
- Disability management

We have reviewed the national and provincial firefighter associations' websites.

Next Steps: Conduct searches and reviews of the 400+ municipal firefighter services in Ontario

Establishing Firefighters' Research Priorities (Objective 3)

In the new year, our focus will be to establish priorities for firefighter studies. We will conduct qualitative studies which can be done as short-term student projects at different institutions. Interviews with non-injured firefighters will focus on prevention; whereas interviews with injured firefighters will focus on return to work processes. The themes identified in these focus group will be used to develop a quantitative survey that can be administered to the fire services. The results of this survey will be used to develop research ideas/questions and plan projects for our Phase 2 research proposal.

Next Steps: 1) Circulate draft semi-structured interview guide for feedback; & 2) Apply for ethics approval.

Website (Objective 4)

Over the past 6 months, we have been working with a contracted website developer to develop the FIREWELL logo and create a website that will offer firefighters:

- videos on how to perform firefighting tasks safely;
- the latest firefighter safety research info;
- tools and resources to help you manage your mental health, bone and joint, fitness and chronic disease;
- a forum where firefighters can interact with other firefighters.

The website will also function as a platform for sharing information with the group, and for interventions for future trials.



Next Steps: Ask team to review website while it is under construction and offer feedback on content, as well as suggestions on relevant work that can be linked to on the website.