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SB-230 Workers' compensation: firefighters. (2025-2026)

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Senate Bill No. 230

CHAPTER 404

An act to amend Sections 3212, 3212.1, 3212.15, 3212.6, 3212.8, 3212.85, and 3212.9 of the Labor Code, relating to workers' compensation.

[Approved by Governor October 06, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State October 06, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 230, Laird. Workers' compensation: firefighters.

Existing law establishes a workers' compensation system, administered by the Administrative Director of the Division of Workers' Compensation, to compensate an employee, as defined, for injuries sustained in the course of employment. Existing law creates a rebuttable presumption that specified injuries, such as cancer or post-traumatic stress disorder, developed or manifested in the course of employment of a specified member of law enforcement or a specified first responder arose out of and in the course of employment. Existing law makes these provisions applicable to certain active firefighting members, including active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation or active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation.

This bill would, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026, additionally apply these provisions to active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport, as specified.

Existing law creates a rebuttable presumption that other injuries, including pneumonia, tuberculosis, or meningitis, developed or manifested in the course of employment of a specified member of law enforcement or a specified first responder arose out of and in the course of employment. Existing law makes these provisions applicable to certain active firefighting members, including volunteers who are partly paid or fully paid by, among others, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection or a county forestry or firefighting unit.

The bill would, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026, also apply these provisions to active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport, National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation, or United States Department of Defense installation.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 3212 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3212. (a) (1) In the case of members of a sheriff's office or the California Highway Patrol, district attorney's staff of inspectors and investigators or of police or fire departments of cities, counties, cities and counties, districts or other public or municipal

corporations or political subdivisions, whether those members are volunteer, partly paid, or fully paid, and in the case of active firefighting members of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection whose duties require firefighting or of any county forestry or firefighting department or unit, whether voluntary, fully paid, or partly paid, and in the case of members of the warden service of the Wildlife Protection Branch of the Department of Fish and Game whose principal duties consist of active law enforcement service, excepting those whose principal duties are clerical or otherwise do not clearly fall within the scope of active law enforcement service such as stenographers, telephone operators, and other officeworkers, the term "injury" as used in this act includes hernia when any part of the hernia develops or manifests itself during a period while the member is in the service in the office, staff, division, department, or unit, and in the case of members of fire departments, except those whose principal duties are clerical, such as stenographers, telephone operators, and other officeworkers, and in the case of county forestry or firefighting departments, except those whose principal duties are clerical, such as stenographers, telephone operators, and other officeworkers, and in the case of active firefighting members of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection whose duties require firefighting, and in the case of members of the warden service of the Wildlife Protection Branch of the Department of Fish and Game whose principal duties consist of active law enforcement service, excepting those whose principal duties are clerical or otherwise do not clearly fall within the scope of active law enforcement service such as stenographers, telephone operators, and other officeworkers, the term "injury" includes pneumonia and heart trouble that develops or manifests itself during a period while the member is in the service of the office, staff, department, or unit. In the case of regular salaried county or city and county peace officers, the term "injury" also includes any hernia that manifests itself or develops during a period while the officer is in the service. The compensation that is awarded for the hernia, heart trouble, or pneumonia shall include full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits, as provided by the workers' compensation laws of this state.

(2) The hernia, heart trouble, or pneumonia so developing or manifesting itself in those cases shall be presumed to arise out of and in the course of the employment. This presumption is disputable and may be controverted by other evidence, but unless so controverted, the appeals board is bound to find in accordance with it. The presumption shall be extended to a member following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each full year of the requisite service, but not to exceed 60 months in any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked in the specified capacity.

(3) The hernia, heart trouble, or pneumonia so developing or manifesting itself in those cases shall in no case be attributed to any disease existing prior to that development or manifestation.

(b) This section also applies to all of the following, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026:

(1) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation and who are certified by the United States Department of Defense as meeting its standards for firefighters.

(2) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation and who adhere to training standards established in accordance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13155) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code.

(3) Active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 139 (commencing with Section 139.1) of Subchapter G of Chapter I of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations and are trained and certified by the State Fire Marshal as meeting the standards of Fire Control 5 and Section 139.319 of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations.

SEC. 2. Section 3212.1 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3212.1. (a) This section applies to all of the following:

(1) Active firefighting members, whether volunteers, partly paid, or fully paid, of all of the following fire departments:

(A) A fire department of a city, county, city and county, district, or other public or municipal corporation or political subdivision.

(B) A fire department of the University of California and the California State University.

(C) The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

(D) A county forestry or firefighting department or unit.

(2) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation and who are certified by the Department of Defense as meeting its standards for firefighters.

(3) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation and who adhere to training standards established in accordance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13155) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code.

(4) Active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 139 (commencing with Section 139.1) of Subchapter G of Chapter I of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations and are trained and certified by the State Fire Marshal as meeting the standards of Fire Control 5 and Section 139.319 of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026.

(5) Peace officers, as defined in Section 830.1, subdivision (a) of Section 830.2, and subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 830.37, of the Penal Code, who are primarily engaged in active law enforcement activities.

(6) (A) Fire and rescue services coordinators who work for the Office of Emergency Services.

(B) For purposes of this paragraph, "fire and rescue services coordinators" means coordinators with any of the following job classifications: coordinator, senior coordinator, or chief coordinator.

(b) The term "injury," as used in this division, includes cancer, including leukemia, that develops or manifests itself during a period in which any member described in subdivision (a) is in the service of the department or unit, if the member demonstrates that they were exposed, while in the service of the department or unit, to a known carcinogen as defined by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, or as defined by the director.

(c) The compensation that is awarded for cancer shall include full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits, as provided by this division.

(d) The cancer so developing or manifesting itself in these cases shall be presumed to arise out of and in the course of the employment. This presumption is disputable and may be controverted by evidence that the primary site of the cancer has been established and that the carcinogen to which the member has demonstrated exposure is not reasonably linked to the disabling cancer. Unless so controverted, the appeals board is bound to find in accordance with the presumption. This presumption shall be extended to a member following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each full year of the requisite service, but not to exceed 120 months in any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked in the specified capacity.

(e) The amendments to this section enacted during the 1999 portion of the 1999–2000 Regular Session shall be applied to claims for benefits filed or pending on or after January 1, 1997, including, but not limited to, claims for benefits filed on or after that date that have previously been denied, or that are being appealed following denial.

(f) This section shall be known, and may be cited, as the William Dallas Jones Cancer Presumption Act of 2010.

SEC. 3. Section 3212.15 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3212.15. (a) This section applies to all of the following:

(1) Active firefighting members, whether volunteers, partly paid, or fully paid, of all of the following fire departments:

(A) A fire department of a city, county, city and county, district, or other public or municipal corporation or political subdivision.

(B) A fire department of the University of California and the California State University.

(C) The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

(D) A county forestry or firefighting department or unit.

(2) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation and who are certified by the Department of Defense as meeting its standards for firefighters.

(3) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation and who adhere to training standards established in accordance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13155) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code.

(4) Active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 139 (commencing with Section 139.1) of Subchapter G of Chapter I of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations and are trained and certified by the State Fire Marshal as meeting the standards of Fire Control 5 and Section 139.319 of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026.

(5) Peace officers, as defined in Section 830.1 of, subdivisions (a), (b), and (c) of Section 830.2 of, Section 830.32 of, subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 830.37 of, Section 830.5 of, and Section 830.55 of, the Penal Code, who are primarily engaged in active law enforcement activities.

(6) (A) Fire and rescue services coordinators who work for the Office of Emergency Services.

(B) For purposes of this paragraph, "fire and rescue services coordinators" means coordinators with any of the following job classifications: coordinator, senior coordinator, or chief coordinator.

(b) In the case of a person described in subdivision (a), the term "injury," as used in this division, includes "post-traumatic stress disorder," as diagnosed according to the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association and that develops or manifests itself during a period in which any person described in subdivision (a) is in the service of the department, unit, office, or agency.

(c) For an injury that is diagnosed as specified in subdivision (b):

(1) The compensation that is awarded shall include full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits, as provided by this division.

(2) The injury so developing or manifesting itself in these cases shall be presumed to arise out of and in the course of the employment. This presumption is disputable and may be controverted by other evidence, but unless so controverted, the appeals board is bound to find in accordance with the presumption. This presumption shall be extended to a person described in subdivision (a) following termination of service for a period of 3 calendar months for each full year of the requisite service, but not to exceed 60 months in any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked in the specified capacity.

(d) Compensation shall not be paid pursuant to this section for a claim of injury unless the person has performed services for the department, unit, office, or agency for at least six months. The six months of employment need not be continuous. This subdivision does not apply if the injury is caused by a sudden and extraordinary employment condition.

(e) This section, as added by Section 2 of Chapter 390 of the Statutes of 2019, applies to injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2020.

(f) (1) The Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation shall submit a report to the Legislature analyzing the effectiveness of the presumption created by this section. The report shall review data from post-traumatic stress disorder injuries for which compensation is claimed under this section from January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2025. The report shall be provided to the Senate Committee on Labor, Public Employment and Retirement and the Assembly Committee on Insurance no later than January 1, 2027.

(2) The Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation shall submit a report to the Legislature analyzing claims filed for post-traumatic stress disorder injury for which compensation is claimed by public safety dispatchers, public safety telecommunicators, and emergency response communication employees, from January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2023. The study shall review data, including, but not limited to, the total number of claims, frequency of claim acceptance, frequency of claim denial, the initial claim determination, and the average time between the filing of a claim and the final determination of compensability. The report shall be provided to the Senate Committee on Labor, Public Employment and Retirement and the Assembly Committee on Insurance no later than January 1, 2025. For purposes of this subdivision, a "public safety dispatcher," "public safety telecommunicator," or "emergency response communication employee" means an individual employed by a public safety agency whose primary responsibility is to receive, process, transmit, or dispatch emergency and nonemergency calls for law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, and other public safety services by telephone, radio, or other communication device, and includes an individual who supervises other individuals who perform these functions.

(3) A report submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

(g) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2029, and as of that date is repealed.

SEC. 4. Section 3212.6 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3212.6. (a) (1) In the case of a member of a police department of a city or county, or a member of the sheriff's office of a county, or a member of the California Highway Patrol, or an inspector or investigator in a district attorney's office of any county whose principal duties consist of active law enforcement service, or a prison or jail guard or correctional officer who is employed by a public agency, when that person is employed upon a regular, full-time salary, or in the case of members of fire departments of any city, county, or district, or other public or municipal corporations or political subdivisions, when those members are employed on a regular fully paid basis, and in the case of active firefighting members of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection whose duties require firefighting and first-aid response services, or of any county forestry or firefighting department or unit, where those members are employed on a regular fully paid basis, excepting those whose principal duties are clerical or otherwise do not clearly fall within the scope of active law enforcement, firefighting, or emergency first-aid response service such as stenographers, telephone operators, and other office workers, the term "injury" includes tuberculosis that develops or manifests itself during a period while that member is in the service of that department or office. The compensation that is awarded for the

tuberculosis shall include full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits as provided by the provisions of this division.

(2) The tuberculosis so developing or manifesting itself shall be presumed to arise out of and in the course of the employment. This presumption is disputable and may be controverted by other evidence, but unless so controverted, the appeals board is bound to find in accordance with it. This presumption shall be extended to a member following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each full year of the requisite service, but not to exceed 60 months in any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked in the specified capacity.

(3) A public entity may require applicants for employment in firefighting positions who would be entitled to the benefits granted by this section to be tested for infection for tuberculosis.

(b) This section also applies to all of the following, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026:

(1) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation and who are certified by the United States Department of Defense as meeting its standards for firefighters.

(2) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation and who adhere to training standards established in accordance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13155) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code.

(3) Active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 139 (commencing with Section 139.1) of Subchapter G of Chapter I of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations and are trained and certified by the State Fire Marshal as meeting the standards of Fire Control 5 and Section 139.319 of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations.

SEC. 5. Section 3212.8 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3212.8. (a) In the case of members of a sheriff's office, of police or fire departments of cities, counties, cities and counties, districts, or other public or municipal corporations or political subdivisions, or individuals described in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2 of the Penal Code, whether those persons are volunteer, partly paid, or fully paid, and in the case of active firefighting members of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or of any county forestry or firefighting department or unit, whether voluntary, fully paid, or partly paid, excepting those whose principal duties are clerical or otherwise do not clearly fall within the scope of active law enforcement service or active firefighting services, such as stenographers, telephone operators, and other offworkers, the term "injury" as used in this division, includes a blood-borne infectious disease or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infection when any part of the blood-borne infectious disease or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infection develops or manifests itself during a period while that person is in the service of that office, staff, division, department, or unit. The compensation that is awarded for a blood-borne infectious disease or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infection shall include, but not be limited to, full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits, as provided by the workers' compensation laws of this state.

(b) (1) The blood-borne infectious disease or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infection so developing or manifesting itself in those cases shall be presumed to arise out of and in the course of the employment or service. This presumption is disputable and may be controverted by other evidence, but unless so controverted, the appeals board is bound to find in accordance with it.

(2) The blood-borne infectious disease presumption shall be extended to a person covered by subdivision (a) following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each full year of service, but not to exceed 60 months in any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked in the specified capacity.

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (2), the methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infection presumption shall be extended to a person covered by subdivision (a) following termination of service for a period of 90 days, commencing with the last day actually worked in the specified capacity.

(c) The blood-borne infectious disease or methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* skin infection so developing or manifesting itself in those cases shall in no case be attributed to any disease or skin infection existing prior to that development or manifestation.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "blood-borne infectious disease" means a disease caused by exposure to pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood that can cause disease in humans, including those pathogenic microorganisms defined as blood-borne pathogens by the Department of Industrial Relations.

(e) This section also applies to all of the following, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026:

(1) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation and who are certified by the United States Department of Defense as meeting its standards for firefighters.

(2) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation and who adhere to training standards established in accordance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13155) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code.

(3) Active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 139 (commencing with Section 139.1) of Subchapter G of Chapter I of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations and are trained and certified by the State Fire Marshal as meeting the standards of Fire Control 5 and Section 139.319 of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations.

SEC. 6. Section 3212.85 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3212.85. (a) This section applies to peace officers described in Sections 830.1 to 830.5, inclusive, of the Penal Code, and members of a fire department.

(b) The term "injury," as used in this division, includes illness or resulting death due to exposure to a biochemical substance that develops or occurs during a period in which any member described in subdivision (a) is in the service of the department or unit.

(c) The compensation that is awarded for injury pursuant to this section shall include full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits, as provided by this division.

(d) The injury that develops or manifests itself in these cases shall be presumed to arise out of, and in the course of, the employment. This presumption is disputable and may be controverted by other evidence. Unless controverted, the appeals board is bound to find in accordance with the presumption. This presumption shall be extended to a member following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each full year of the requisite service, but not to exceed 60 months in any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked in the specified capacity.

(e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Biochemical substance" means any biological or chemical agent that may be used as a weapon of mass destruction, including, but not limited to, any chemical warfare agent, weaponized biological agent, or nuclear or radiological agent, as these terms are defined in Section 11417 of the Penal Code.

(2) "Members of a fire department" includes, but is not limited to, an apprentice, volunteer, partly paid, or fully paid member of any of the following:

(A) A fire department of a city, county, city and county, district, or other public or municipal corporation or political subdivision.

(B) A fire department of the University of California and the California State University.

(C) The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

(D) A county forestry or firefighting department or unit.

(E) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation and who are certified by the United States Department of Defense as meeting its standards for firefighters for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026.

(F) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation and who adhere to training standards established in accordance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13155) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026.

(G) Active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 139 (commencing with Section 139.1) of Subchapter G of Chapter I of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations and are trained and certified by the State Fire Marshal as meeting the standards of Fire Control 5 and Section 139.319 of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026.

SEC. 7. Section 3212.9 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3212.9. (a) (1) In the case of a member of a police department of a city, county, or city and county, or a member of the sheriff's office of a county, or a member of the California Highway Patrol, or a county probation officer, or an inspector or investigator in a

district attorney's office of any county whose principal duties consist of active law enforcement service, when that person is employed on a regular, full-time salary, or in the case of a member of a fire department of any city, county, or district, or other public or municipal corporation or political subdivision, or any county forestry or firefighting department or unit, when those members are employed on a regular full-time salary, excepting those whose principal duties are clerical or otherwise do not clearly fall within the scope of active law enforcement or firefighting, such as stenographers, telephone operators, and other officeworkers, the term "injury" includes meningitis that develops or manifests itself during a period while that person is in the service of that department, office, or unit. The compensation that is awarded for the meningitis shall include full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits as provided by the provisions of this division.

(2) The meningitis so developing or manifesting itself shall be presumed to arise out of and in the course of the employment. This presumption is disputable and may be controverted by other evidence, but unless so controverted, the appeals board is bound to find in accordance with it. This presumption shall be extended to a person following termination of service for a period of three calendar months for each full year of the requisite service, but not to exceed 60 months in any circumstance, commencing with the last date actually worked in the specified capacity.

(b) This section also applies to all of the following, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2026:

(1) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a United States Department of Defense installation and who are certified by the United States Department of Defense as meeting its standards for firefighters.

(2) Active firefighting members of a fire department that serves a National Aeronautics and Space Administration installation and who adhere to training standards established in accordance with Article 4 (commencing with Section 13155) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code.

(3) Active firefighting members of a fire department that provides fire protection to a commercial airport regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) under Part 139 (commencing with Section 139.1) of Subchapter G of Chapter I of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations and are trained and certified by the State Fire Marshal as meeting the standards of Fire Control 5 and Section 139.319 of Title 14 of the Federal Code of Regulations.