

# First responders have higher risk of suffering mental disorders

Mental disorders can affect any type of worker in the U.S but a new study found that first responders who are new to the job have a higher risk of suffering from a mental disorder after witnessing repeated traumatic events while working.

The study found that first responders, firefighters and police officers who are relatively new to the job and are exposed to traumatic events like witnessing someone seriously injured or killed have a much higher risk of developing a mental or alcohol use disorder. The study noted that first responders that have been in the profession for a while have no increased risk for mental disorders.

The type of traumatic events that impact first responders the most include seeing someone injured or killed, seeing a dead body, having a close co-worker experience a traumatic event or having someone close to them unexpectedly die. Research found that workers who experienced these types of traumas were more likely to suffer from a mental disorder if they were newer workers.

In addition to first responders, any workers who experience traumatic events while working are much more likely to suffer from mental disorders. Workers who develop mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, psychiatric disorders or alcohol abuse may be entitled to receive workers' compensation benefits for their illness.

Workers who suffer illnesses or injuries are able to apply for workers' compensation benefits in Pennsylvania. Those benefits can help cover lost wages as well as medical expenses caused from their workplace injury or illness. Workers may benefit

from consulting a workers' compensation attorney to discuss their specific case as well as help them apply for benefits.

**Source:** EHS Today, "[Witnessing Traumatic Events May Take Toll on Novice Responders' Mental Health](#)," Laura Walter, March 22, 2013