

# Mental health problems among first responders in Canada

## > Mental health problems among first responders



**49.1%**

of paramedics report mental health problems\*.



**34.1%**

of firefighters report mental health problems\*.



**48.4%**

of 911 operators report mental health problems\*.

**3/4**

of first responders

believe their work involves the inevitable risk of psychological harm.

First responders

suffer much more from mental health problems than the general population (around 10%)

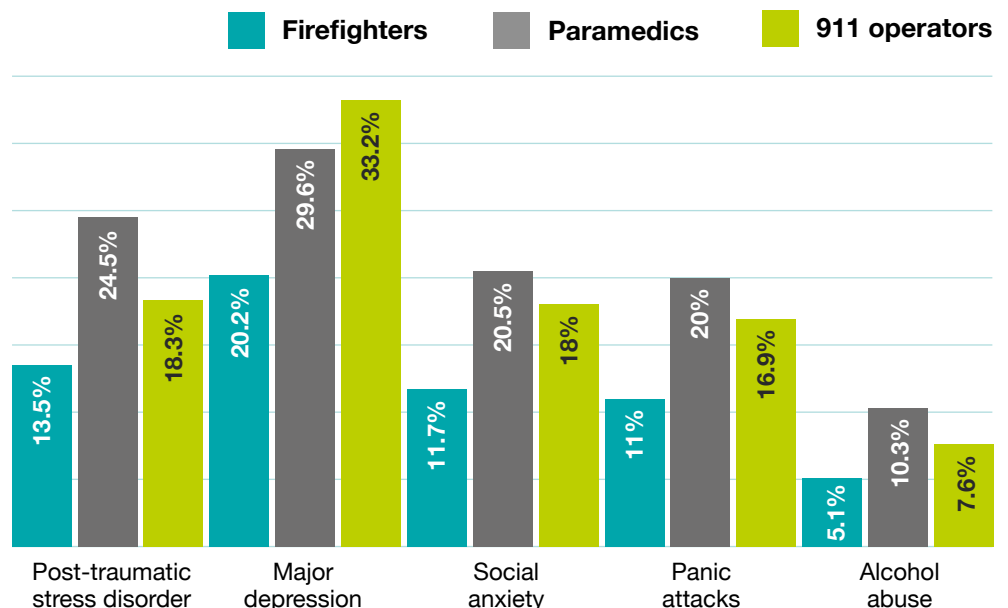
*\*Post-traumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, substance abuse disorder and/or have received a diagnosis of a mental health problem (i.e., obsessive compulsive disorder, bipolar I disorder, bipolar II disorder, cyclothymic disorder)*

## > Nature of mental health problems among first responders

### Main triggers of mental health problems

Repeated exposure to human suffering, which increases emotional stress.

Managers' lack of consideration for the well-being of 1<sup>st</sup> responders and the training deficit in mental health for everyone.



> **Level of experience of 1<sup>st</sup> responders the most affected**



**10-15 years**

As the years go by and traumatic events add up, 1<sup>st</sup> responders lose more of their **resilience**.

> **Sociodemographic characteristics of the most affected 1<sup>st</sup> responders**



**Women**  
(only among firefighters)



People who are **single, divorced or widowed**



People with **less education**

> **Protective factors**



**Caring social support**  
at work and at home



**Psychological support and effective prevention**  
by the employer



**Relevant mental health training**

Infographic created in partnership with Mental Health Research Canada

Other sources: Study on the symptoms of mental health problems among public safety employees in Canada. R Nicholas Carleton PhD, Tracie O. Afifi, PhD, Sarah Turner MSc. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 2018.

Lentz, L.; Smith-MacDonald, L.; Malloy, D.C.; Anderson, G.S.; Beshai, S.; Ricciardelli, R.; Bremault-Phillips, S.; Carleton, R.N. A Qualitative Analysis of the Mental Health Training and Educational Needs of Firefighters, Paramedics, and Public Safety Communicators in Canada. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2022, 19, 6972. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19126972>