

New protective underwear for Skellefteå and Karlstad

Few firefighters do not recognize the terms "Skellefteå model" and "Healthy Firefighters" – both synonymous with Skellefteå firefighter Stefan Magnusson. It has been over 25 years since the project for a better working environment left the starting blocks and Stefan has retired. But as a retirement gift – to his colleagues at the rescue service – he provided the opportunity to test CPP Garments and the Firefighters' Cancer Fund's new protective undergarment with activated carbon.

Fire Chief Ola Lindström in Skellefteå has only had the seven sets of undergarments at the station for a week when this interview is conducted. Now, plans are being made for how the sets should be used most effectively.

– The idea is that we will use the sets for our smoke divers and smoke dive leaders in each shift. They will simply have a set in their place and decide for themselves at which alarms it should be used. It will be up to each individual to assess," says Ola Lindström.

The undergarment, which will not be personal, will also be used during planned exercises when burning is involved, primarily for the instructors.

Gift from the foundation

– We will develop our own routines for use, for washing, and not least provide our perspective on user-friendliness: How does it work in the cold? Is it comfortable to wear close to the body or do additional clothes need to be worn underneath? And how does the hood work? We will provide feedback to the manufacturer and hopefully contribute with good points," says Ola Lindström.

The seven sets of undergarments have been purchased by the Firefighters' Cancer Fund and donated to Skellefteå, which has long shown leadership in working for a better working environment.

– Now it is up to them to find their routines and ways of working with the undergarment, which we consider to be the best protection for our firefighters, says Anders Cederberg, chairman of the fundraising foundation. Of course, we would like to have feedback along the way, to hopefully give the country's rescue services an indication of what the new protective undergarment can do for the working environment.

Karlstad invests in instructors

When the Karlstad Regional Fire Brigade faced the annual training weeks for around 220 part-timers, strength leader Tony Falk began to think about the working environment for the federation's instructors. A burning with fibrous material all day in a container – for three weeks.

– Then the thoughts started about the working environment, especially for our instructors. I saw an advertisement for the protective undergarment and got the green light to purchase three sets. As of writing, half of the federation's part-timers have been in Karlstad for the annual exercise. The response from colleagues who have used the undergarment is positive, and Tony Falk has used it himself in his role as an instructor.

– It feels very good so far. I personally use it with a t-shirt underneath and it has worked well. I haven't tried the hood yet but will test it next time to see if it's easy to get it to seal tightly.

