



BFC Annual Report

Presented at the Annual General Assembly May 2nd, 2019.

BFC has manifested itself steadily throughout 2018. The Board of Directors and Ambassadors are energetic and engaged and has a focus on collaboration and the common goal of political recognition of "brandcancer" ("firefighter cancer") and better preventive actions.

Our existence, visibility and function are becoming more and more known and recognized. Both among firefighters, emergency services, institutes and in political circles in this country. But also outside the country's borders is BFC well known and has many good colleagues and contacts with whom we share knowledge.

During 2018 we have tried to launch several pilot projects, among other things a project about sufficient cleaning and decontamination of firefighter suits. There was a great deal of interest in both emergency services and politics. It has turned out to be quite a challenge to have it realized since it partly requires a relatively big investment and partly because there seems to be still doubt about the necessity of decontamination. This in spite of more international studies that point to a need for decontamination and not alone traditional washing. However, in the same period, it was possible to make a collaboration between DTU Byg Brand (Danish Technological University Building Fire), DTU Kemi Teknik (Danish Technological University Chemical Technic), Det Økologiske Råd DØR (The Ecological Council) and BFC and a study "How Clean is Clean" was started and expected to be completed medio 2019.

In September, a political agreement was signed between the government, Socialdemokraterne, Dansk Folkeparti and De Radikale Venstre on firefighters' working environment. We are in BFC happy because it shows a clear political will and focus on firefighters' exposure to carcinogens and prevention.

In the agreement it says that "Firefighters must not be getting ill from going to work. Therefore, the emergency services and Arbejdstilsynet (Working Environment Authority) preventive actions should involve the latest research and knowledge. With the agreement, it is necessary to minimize exposure to tars in smoke, particles and soot in connection with their work as much as possible. Tars are carcinogenic and can be found in the smoke that is developed in a fire". It makes it concrete what it is going to mean, and it largely agrees with the "BFC anbefalinger og råd til forebyggende tiltag" ("BFC Recommendations and Advice for Preventive Actions") that we have long ago prepared.

Another place in the agreement states that "The Working Environment Authority will check the hygiene procedures at fire and rescue stations, including suitable facilities for the cleaning of firefighting suits and washing them according to the supplier's instructions. This must be instrumental in ensuring that the preventive work is good enough, e.g. in order to ensure that the firefighting suits are clean before being used." In this part of the text, BFC is concerned with the perception that the supplier's washing instructions are good enough. This is due to two main reasons; that washing instructions are designed to polish the fabric to a greater extent than a washing process removes sufficiently of the harmful substances, and that it does not consider the crucial difference between cleaning and decontamination.

If "How Clean is Clean" will show what similar studies from abroad show, we will with our study be able to demonstrate solutions that can resume the pilot project.



BRANDFOLKENES CANCERFORENING BFC



In the agreement there is also more funding of further research:

"Research

The results from "Biobrand" have given rise to further focus on the hygiene in relation to firefighter's suits and the so-called "safe zones", where firefighters can remove the respiratory protective device. The parties to the agreement agree that follow-up research in the area should be given priority.

The agreement parties agree that more research in the area is sought to be financed through the Arbejdsmiljøforskningsfonden (The Working Environment Research Fund)".

Here, our ongoing study can be included in the upcoming study and BFC has, together with DTU and DØR, designed a continuous study that will fully uncover the political wish. But not only that, so in the study we will create a working group that, on the basis of the results, will prepare and recommend procedures and teaching material that can be used in the emergency services and in the police. This working group will consist of relevant actors, many of whom have already indicated their participation.

The application is submitted to the Arbejdsmiljøforskningsfonden (The Working Environment Research Fund), which gives answers in mid-June 2019. In connection with the design of the study program, which we call FAKTA-brand: "Forebyggelse Af Kontaminering fra Tjærestoffers Afsætning ved brand" ("Prevention of Contamination from Tar Substances' Deposition in a Fire"), we sought cooperation with the NFA (National Research Center for the Working Environment), which we are aware of would also apply for the funds, in the belief that we could jointly achieve even better final results. Unfortunately, NFA was not interested in such a cooperation.

In November, BFC was invited to a CTIF two-day seminar as a speaker and it was a great success. We were actually invited to apply for admission to CTIF health commission. This led to BFC seeking admission as a member of Dansk CTIF, after which we were appointed to be the Danish representative in CTIF Health Commission. We are both happy and proud of this and we are already active in the Commission.

In 2018, we started to create a magazine that will inform emergency services, researchers and legislators about the entire cancer problem. The magazine is now (02 May 2019) completed and sent to the printing house.

Finally, BFC would like to thank all our partners and support members for your invaluable support. And not least a big thank you to the board and our BFC ambassadors for your tireless work for our organization and the health of Danish firefighters.

Without all of you, we would not be able to show the direction in our field.

On behalf of BFC
Tommy Kjær
President