

Optimal Safety in the Face of Forest Fires

KKL-JNF has tested innovative fire-retardant apparel to great success. "Light, flexible, and much safer than its predecessor", a firefighter confirmed. The new clothing also costs four times as much than that formerly worn by the firefighters. KKL-JNF, for whom the safety of its personnel is paramount, plans to purchase 350 of the new fire-resistant suits.



Firefighters in action. Top photo: Anil Zaher, Bottom photo: Yossi Ifergan, KKL-JNF Photo Archive

To be a firefighter means being alert even when at rest and at the start of each day, with the hope that it ends peacefully. In the case of KKL-JNF firefighters, vigilance is particularly heightened in summer and autumn, when the land is parched, and every spark can turn into a wildfire. Roi Revah, a patrolman and head of the KKL-JNF firefighting team, shares his experience: "It's stressful to enter a burning forest with tree canopies on fire and the air thick with smoke. It's frightening, even after all my experience and time in the field; the first stage of fighting a fire is full of tension. The smallest mistake in judgement can end in disaster."

As part of his work, Revah is responsible for the Menashe-Sharon area, located between the northern and the central districts, and one of the country's most forested regions. He is one of the first of five KKL-JNF firefighters to wear the flame-resistant suit, which, due to its innovative retardants, is of

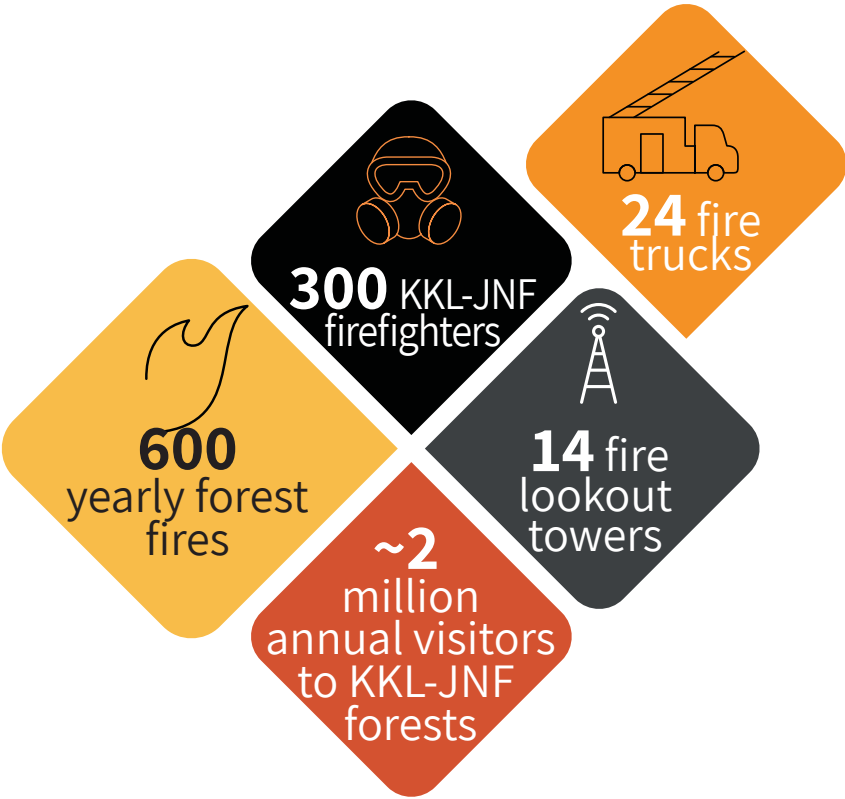
the highest quality. Revah is effusive about the suit, describing it as "light, pliable and stretchy, and much more protective than what we previously wore".

When it comes to firefighting, human life is paramount, and therefore KKL-JNF intends

dipped in flame retardant, which is no longer effective after twelve washes.

The advantage of the suits is not only the protection they provide against fire. They are also lightweight and designed for comfort, matters of crucial importance. According to Raveh, "When I'm in the field I have to react quickly to danger. Sometimes it's a matter of a split second. The previous suit was very cumbersome, like a heavy coat. The new suit is more comfortable and enables me to move easily and fast, which gives me a significantly greater sense of security. In our work that's critical."

The cost of the new suits is four times more than the previous ones. "The most important resource is the worker, and it is our duty to protect and ensure that our personnel are safe from harm," says Uri Shmueli, KKL-JNF National Safety Officer. "From my perspective, the need for quality protective equipment is first and foremost. The more we invest in safety in general and personal protective apparel and equipment in, particular, the more the workers will avail themselves of them, and therefore be more protected."



to purchase 350 sets of the new flame-retardant suits. The suits, consisting of pants and jackets, are made from a fire-retardant fabric specifically developed to maintain the fire protective quality throughout the life of the garment. This, in contrast to the apparel used by KKL-JNF today, made of a fabric

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