

The president's office of the Formentera Council announces the basic firefighting training course has come to a close. Designed to give individuals collaborating with the fire brigade a taste of the realities of work in the field, the training sessions took place here on the island December 10 to 22.

Thirteen aspiring firefighters successfully completed the course and competitive process of selection to enter the administration's pool of qualified collaborators. Of that number two have already been hired on by the brigade, which presently comprises seven staff employees, five full-time firefighting personnel and two on-call workers.

Efforts in 2018

The crew were called to duty a total of 183 times in 2018. Twenty-five of those actions were fire-related; 14 involved search and rescue and another 26, false alarms; 50 and 68 were the tallies of operations giving technical assistence and preventive help.

Bartomeu Escandell, secretary of the president's office, said the number of blazes in 2018 had dropped by half compared to the same figure in 2017 and contended the dip had allowed the brigade to boost preventive action such as with buffer zones in wooded areas like la Mola. In high fire-risk parts of the island, so-called “mobile forest patrol routes” are another feature of service receiving the brigade's increased attention.

The past year came with four blazes in areas of vegetation that affected 70 square metres — compared to approximately 30 hectares incinerated in 2017 as a result of the three wildfires in Cala Saona.

New equipment

Another important piece of news this last year was the Balearic port authority's hand-off of a six-person, water pump-equipped light lorry with capacity for 1,800L, is designed both for fighting fires and lifesaving and rescue operations. At the moment the brigade's mobile corps is composed of two rapid response vehicles (both pickups), a heavy lorry for rural operations and

a light lorry for urban ones.