

Firefighters return to station kitchen fire

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Firefighters don't expect to find their firehouse on fire.

But that's what happened Sunday when the crew of North Charleston's Station 6 returned from a routine fire call to find their building filled with smoke and the sound of smoke detectors beeping.

A small kitchen fire was caused by cooking left on the stove, said Bianca Sancic, public information officer for the North Charleston Fire Department. Firefighters had been summoned to a call at Charleston Southern University and apparently left a stove turned on.

"They were not gone too long," Sancic said. The crew returned to the station at Greenridge Road and Rivers Avenue shortly after 7 p.m. and discovered the fire.

"They put it out with fire extinguishers," Sancic said. After extinguishing the fire, the crew brought in a hose line while they checked to see if the fire had extended into the walls.

Fire damage was confined to the kitchen cabinets and the hood above the range. The cabinets are being replaced, Sancic said.

But smoke damage caused the dormitory and other areas of the second floor to be uninhabitable.

A fire engine and ladder truck that were housed at Station 6 have been relocated to nearby stations, Sancic said. "Our response time will not be affected."

The firefighters should be able to return to Station 6 in about a week,

Sancic said. A cleaning crew has been hired to clean the smoke damage from the second floor.

Sancic, who doubles as a fire safety educator, said she did not know if any disciplinary action will be taken but that there will most likely be additional training for the firefighters.

"Kitchen fires are the most common cause of fires," Sancic said. "And firefighters are no different from anyone else. They have to turn off the stove when they leave."

Plans for two fire stations the city is building -- one on Dorchester Road and one on Palmetto Commerce Parkway -- call for sprinklers throughout, she said. Station 6 does not have sprinklers.

"A sprinkler could have abated some of the damage," Sancic said.

The new fire stations' stoves also will have commercial hood systems.

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