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New Year's blaze closes Westlake fire station

Lauren Zakalik, WFAA 5:45 p.m. CST January 1, 2015

"We're always used to helping other people out, but now it's turned on us," says Westlake Fire Chief Richard Whitten.

WESTLAKE -- Firefighters are accustomed to trudging through charred homes, just not usually their own.

"We're always used to helping other people out, but now it's turned on us," says Westlake Fire Chief Richard Whitten.

Wednesday night, as Westlake firefighters returned back to their station from a call, they found their own living quarters ablaze. Chief Whitten believes something ignited in the kitchen, where they had been cooking before the call, though he says the stove was indeed turned off.

"They went to work immediately, just like they normally would," Whitten says of his firefighters, battling their own fire.

Other nearby fire departments came to help, but after two hours of firefighting, the damage had already been done.

A look inside the living quarters Thursday showed exactly why the station is now closed. There are holes in the roof because the fire got into the attic. Ash and water damage is pervasive. The cost of the damage is not known yet.

"We will not be running out of the station for about the month," Whitten says. "It'll take us a month to make changes here."



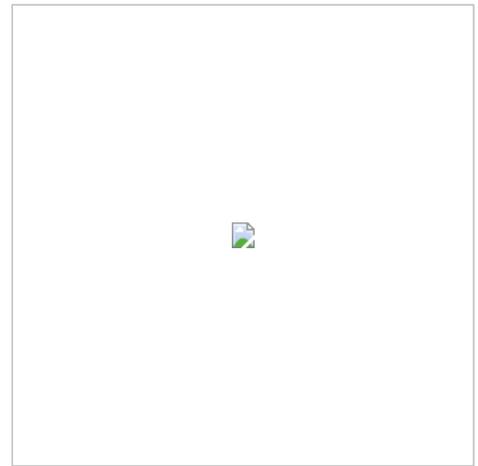
Westlake FD loses trailer to fire

So for now, the Westlake Fire Department will be operating out of Southlake Fire House number 3. It's about four miles down the road. Chief Whitten says the temporary closure shouldn't delay emergency responses, especially because crews are usually out driving around their small town anyway. Westlake is only seven square miles, Whitten says.

"We don't expect to see any response times changes," he added.

Nobody was inside when the fire started, and no one was injured.

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