

Boardwalk

Cocoanut Grove damaged by fire

Hundreds evacuated

SANTA CRUZ — A Santa Cruz firefighter returned to earth after helping douse a fire that caused \$25,000 in damage to the second floor of the Cocoanut Grove, near the ballroom.

The fire started about 1 p.m. from a torch that a roofing contractor was using inside the Cocoanut Grove. The fire spread in the inside of a wall and Santa Cruz Seaside Company employees were unable to extinguish it.

"We're lucky they spotted it quickly," said Battalion Chief Matt McCaslin of the Santa Cruz Fire Department. "If that had gone undetected it could have been a real serious fire."

Streets were lined with a couple hundred people who were evacuated from indoor areas of the complex while the fire was extinguished. Four Seaside Co. employees suffered respiratory irritation from smoke and dust from fire extinguishers. Three were taken to Dominican hospital, treated for smoke inhalation and released.

The Cocoanut Grove was back in business by 3 p.m.

