

# The Daily Northwestern

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## Vector agrees to cover cost of lab explosion cleanup

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The \$50,000 fume scrubber that Vector Technical Group insisted Prof. Menijeh Razeghi test received an unceremonial funeral Friday.

"It's sitting in little pieces in the back of the (Tech) building," McCormick Dean Jerome Cohen said.

The scrubber, which exploded Thursday evening from a pressure buildup during testing, caused the flooding of Razeghi's lab in the Technological Institute with water and nontoxic potassium permanganate. University Police and the Evanston Fire Department evacuated the building.

Razeghi said Vector employees cleaned the chemicals from her lab by midnight Thursday. Vector also covered the cost of the scrubber because Northwestern had never paid for it.

Razeghi said she was aware that the scrubber was not compatible with the composition used in her laser system. Razeghi uses gallium arsenide in place of silicon to run the system.

Cohen said Razeghi wasn't "keen" about testing the scrubber, but Vector architects wanted to try it.

Representatives from Vector were unavailable for comment.

Destruction to the lab was confined to the ceiling and floor tiles, Cohen said.

## Blast

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faction with the system.

NU's director of university research safety, Todd Leasia, said Vector technicians had identified the tanks as the source of the problem, but wanted Razeghi to continue testing the system.

A Vector representative reached in Santa Clara said the company was aware of the spill, but he would not comment on it.

Vector engineer Ray Krummen had been on the site testing the scrubber and attempting to work out its problems. He was on the site after the spill, but was not available for comment.

Razeghi, one of the world's leading researchers in optoelectronics, was testing the scrubber in the exploratory lab to determine

whether she would bring it to her new lab in the Material Sciences Building.

The professor said there are better, solid-based systems for cleaning pollutants out of chemicals, but the ES-1500, a liquid-based system, is the least expensive.

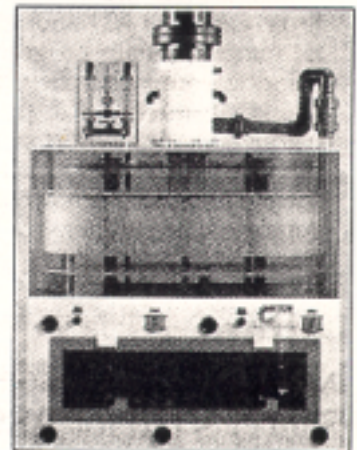
"I would prefer using a solid-based system, but it is more expensive," Razeghi said.

After yesterday's explosion, Razeghi said she would not use the liquid-based scrubber.

The spill was cleaned up by lab technicians and Evanston firefighters using an absorbent powder.

Three University Police cars and two Evanston Fire Department trucks responded to the fire alarm. Evanston Police assisted with traffic control on Sheridan Road.

"It was more of a mess than anything," Leasia said. "But precautionary measures had to be taken."



From Vector Technical Group, Inc.

The ES-1500 fume scrubber.