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Chemical spill at Nashua North sends 6 to hospital

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A chemical spill at Nashua North High School sent six people to the hospital Monday. The spill is under investigation. (Jeff Hastings)

NASHUA — Six people were transported to the hospital on Monday after a chemical spill at Nashua High School North. The spill is currently under investigation as suspicious in nature.

Around 11:30 a.m. Monday, fire crews and ambulances responded to the high school for a hazardous materials incident involving a Grolleg silicone-based powder used for ceramics.

“It can be toxic, so you need to avoid breathing the product in,” said Deputy Fire Chief Michael O’Brien.

Four students who were exposed to the product were transported to Southern New Hampshire Medical Center as a precaution, although they were not symptomatic, according to O’Brien.

Two teachers who were showing some mild symptoms from the irritant substance were also transported to SNHMC. Before being transported, all six of the individuals exposed to the substance were decontaminated on site and showered at the school, said O’Brien.

According to fire officials, a complete decontamination area was set up, as several rooms within the school’s B-wing were exposed to the product, specifically an art classroom.

“There is a situation, and it is currently under investigation as to why multiple rooms were contaminated,” said O’Brien. “It may be suspicious at this time, and it could be some form of misguided shenanigans.”

In addition to local fire and police, the Souhegan Valley Mutual Aid Team responded to lead the hazardous materials situation.

“We are trained in the incident command system, and although this wasn’t as acute or dynamic as it could have been, there was very good cooperation between all of the agencies involved,” said O’Brien.

School remained in session during the incident, however a portion of the school was blocked off to students, and some classes were relocated to different parts of the building.

An outside cleaning vendor that specialized in hazardous materials arrived later on Monday to rid the school of any remaining contaminants.

Still, O’Brien said the chemical was isolated, and officials blocked off the contaminated area and eliminated its exposure as quickly as possible.

The chemical product is a talcum-like substance used for glazing pottery that, once disturbed, can quickly spread, according to fire officials.

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