

Good, Clean (Safe) Fun: Professor Showers for Lab Safety

Kinner showers for lab safety

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Lab safety took a zany, soggy turn Tuesday, when the Environmental Research Group tapped Nancy Kinner, professor of civil and environmental engineering, for a hands-on

demonstration of the emergency shower in their Gregg Hall lab. Her dousing not only gave students and faculty experience with this important (if rarely used) piece of equipment, it raised funds for the student group Environmental and Water Resources Institute, which sold raffle tickets for the chance to pull the shower handle.

“Demonstrating operation of laboratory emergency equipment is an important component of safety training, but this level of participation took it to a whole new level,” said Andy Glode, laboratory safety officer with UNH’s Environmental Health and Safety office. “Nancy is very supportive of laboratory safety initiatives and doing this to promote the student group was a wonderful, memorable gesture.”

The shower demonstration was one part of the ERG’s annual safety review, which included demonstrations of safety components like the fume hoods and eye washes and discussions of dangerous chemicals. “It’s easy to become complacent in the lab, to forget that the chemicals you’re using every day can be dangerous to your health,” said ERG research engineer Scott Greenwood, who helped organize the safety shower. “We hope that when the students go back into the lab, safety will be in the forefront of their minds.”

Raffle winner Alyson Packhem ’14, a graduate student of Kinner’s, said the demonstration’s lessons are likely to last. “I suppose it was a little awkward to douse my esteemed professor in cold water, but it would be completely necessary in the case of an emergency,” she said. “If Nancy actually got exposed to hazardous chemicals, I would be glad to pull the shower again.”

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