

and her apartment in Brighton, MacDonald said.

“It was more challenging because the student left,” he said.

A chemistry professor came to the lab and determined responders should dilute the thionyl chloride with “large amounts of water,” MacDonald said, and Boston College brought in a cleaning company.

It is still unclear what caused the reaction, he said.

Thionyl chloride reacts strongly with moisture and can be dangerous to humans if vapors are inhaled, said Lawrence Scott, Cho’s professor. The chemical can be used to make mustard gas and nerve toxins.


“Honestly, I think she was probably never expecting this to happen. This seems like a somewhat standard procedure,” Schuster said regarding the experiment.


Schuster said chemistry students at Boston College are required to take a lab safety training course. While it is uncommon for students to work alone, the department’s guidelines for lab safety do not forbid it, according to a document posted online by the Boston College Office of Environmental Health and Safety.


Still, researchers are warned not to work with hazardous or potentially explosive compounds by themselves, said Kai Hong, 26, another chemistry graduate student who was going to the building this afternoon.


Dunn said that to his knowledge, Cho, whom he called a “skilled researcher,” did not violate any safety procedures.

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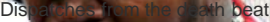
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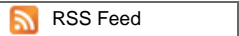
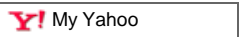


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