**Beacon chemistry teacher faulted by safety expert after students burned in experiment**

**Manhattan teacher Anna Poole, was wrong to not make her students wear protective gear during her class demonstration, says Robert Morris of laboratory design company Flow Safe. Two high schoolers were badly burned in Poole’s class Thursday.**

BY [BEN CHAPMAN](http://www.nydailynews.com/authors?author=Ben%20Chapman), [CORKY SIEMASZKO](http://www.nydailynews.com/authors?author=Corky%20Siemaszko)

**NEW YORK DAILY NEWS:**

She had to know she was playing with fire.

The Manhattan teacher whose failed science demonstration left two students badly burned — and who apparently didn’t insist the kids wear protective gear — should have known better, a top safety expert said Friday.

Anna Poole was handling highly **flammable** chemicals in her lab at *The Beacon School* on January 2, 2014.

Lab safety investigator Robert Morris said “What happened was highly **probable**, when you do anything like that.” “They have to know that something like this could happen, and, you have to have the right safety equipment. The idea that this exploded is not unusual. Some of these chemicals can explode on their own, even without fire."

Poole, an experienced chemistry teacher at the public high school, should have been aware of the dangers as she performed her “rainbow experiment.” All chemistry teachers should have knowledge of the American Chemical Society's **guidebook** called “Chemical Safety for Teachers and Their Supervisors.”

It clearly states on page five, “*Always, when* ***hazardous*** *chemicals are used or handled, when glassware is used or handled, when flames are involved, all persons present, whether or not they are the ones doing the handling, must wear eye protection*.”

On the very next page of the safety guidebook for grades 7 through 12, it adds, “*Keep in mind that the vapors [fumes] of flammables … can explode.”*

That handbook also says the lab room should be well-**ventilated** to prevent **combustible** fumes from building up, fire extinguishers should be placed in classrooms, and that students should know how to use the fire extinguishers.

One of Poole’s students said that after the fireball torched the two 16-year-olds, he grabbed the fire extinguisher but couldn’t get it to work.

Other students said Poole did not insist they wear safety goggles or other protective gear before she began putting on her science show.

 “We’re determined to get to the bottom of this so that it never happens again,” Education Department spokesman Devon Puglia said.

But Poole has not been **suspended** and will continue to be in the classroom while the **incident** is being investigated, officials said.

The department’s Science Safety Manual says students “must wear goggles and other protective equipment when appropriate.” But it is **vague** on whether they should wear the gear while watching an experiment like the one Poole was performing.

One student was treated for first-degree burns on her face, **torso** and arm and was standing just 5 feet away from the demonstration table, investigators and witnesses said. She has been released from the hospital.

Another student, however, was hit full-on with the fireball, and classmates said he was screaming, “Help me! Help me!” as the flames began “melting” his skin. Alonzo Yanes, 16, remains hospitalized at New York-Presbyterian Hospital for second-degree burns on his face and neck and possibly some damage to his **airways**, officials said.

Fire investigators have not yet determined the exact cause of the blast. They suspect the fireball was caused when a spark **ignited** fumes **circulating** in the lab.

Accidents like the one Poole was involved in have happened at other schools. The Associated Press reported that at least 150 students had been seriously injured in school laboratory accidents between 1998 and 2002.

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**Current Events in Biology-** *Lab Safety* **Ms. Taylor**

1. **WHO is this article about?**

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1. **WHAT is this story about? List important facts that summarize the article**

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1. **WHEN did this story take place?**

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1. **WHY is this story important?**

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1. **CONNECT the article:** What rules of lab safety were not followed?

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1. **Your Opinion:** Do you think that Poole should be fired? **Why or why not? Support your answer!**

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