Purdue refutes report on college reactors

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Purdue University officials refuted allegations in an ABC-TV News report concerning the safety of nuclear reactors on U.S. college campuses.

In a report broadcast Wednesday, ABC -- in conjunction with students -- said the students could enter 25 research nuclear reactors, even with large backpacks or bags.

ABC said none of the college reactors had metal detectors, just two appeared to have armed guards and many colleges permitted vehicles in close proximity to reactors.

While the reactor building at Purdue is open for students for classes and research, two sets of locked doors protect the reactor room, and admittance is only allowed by appointment and under the supervision of a staff member, Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., said in a statement.

"There are much easier ways to procure radioactive materials, such as uranium. There are even household products that could be purchased that would provide an equivalent amount," said Lefteri Tsoukalas, head of the Purdue School of Nuclear Engineering. "Medical facilities or even delivery vehicles also are more vulnerable and easier targets."

The corner gas station presents more of a threat to safety than this reactor ever could, said Tsoukalas.

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