

Toxic material found in Vegas hotel room

by UPI

LAS VEGAS - Las Vegas police downplayed the discovery of the toxic substance ricin in a hotel room, saying no one was harmed and they weren't looking for suspects. Ricin, used in cancer research, was found Thursday by a man cleaning a suite at an Extended Stay America hotel, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported Friday. The man, saying the material wasn't his, took the toxic substance to the hotel manager's office and the manager called authorities, said Joseph Lombardo, a Las Vegas police captain and head of the local Homeland Security Bureau. The man and three hotel employees were taken to a hospital as a precaution, Lombardo said. The hotel was evacuated. Preliminary tests indicated the substance was ricin, a deadly toxin extracted from castor beans. "Ricin is very serious," Lombardo said. "Something the size of the head of a pin can be deadly." Officials said they didn't consider the incident a terrorist threat. "We don't know that there was any criminal intent on anybody's part," Las Vegas police Sgt. John Loretto said. "It could have been somebody that was reading a book who wanted to try to make something."

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