Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) are synthetic chemicals that were manufactured for use in various industrial and commercial applications - including oil in electrical and hydraulic equipment, and plasticizers in paints, plastics and rubber products - because of their non-flammability, chemical stability, high boiling point and electrical insulation properties.

Concern over PCB toxicity and persistence in the environment led Congress to enact Section 6(e) of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) in 1976 which limits the manufacture, processing and distribution of PCBs. When released into the environment, PCBs do not easily break apart. Instead, they persist for many years, bioaccumulate and bioconcentrate in organisms. The EPA has classified PCBs as probable human carcinogens. Long-term effects of PCB exposure include harm to the nervous and reproductive system, immune system suppression, hormone disruption and skin and eye irritation.

Regional Information

- Requiring PCBs
- PCBs Enforcement
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Region 9 regulated PCB facilities
- Contacts for more information in the Pacific Southwest

National Information

- PCBs Storage & Disposal Rules
- National PCB Website

PCBs in the Environment

- Power plants
- Electrical equipment
- Fire retardants
- Heat transfer fluids
- Commercial and industrial

TSCA Hotline

Contact Information

Hours of operation
8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Monday through Friday EST. (excluding legal holidays)

Phone: (202) 554-1404

Fax (document requests only): (202) 554-5663

E-mail: TSCA-Hotline@epa.gov

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Environmental Assistance Division (T408M)
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Protecting People from PCBs

Shipping companies issuing final notification of legal distribution and export of PCBs
- Memo Release
- Video

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