

POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS (PCBs) FACT SHEET

North Carolina Division of Public Health • Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch

<p><u>Chemical Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufactured as smaller, varying groups of 209 related chlorinated chemicals. • No known natural sources. • Oily, colorless liquid or colorless to light yellow solid. • Some can exist in air as a vapor. • Do not burn easily. • Good insulators. • Persistent in the environment and are found in areas very far away from where they were used. • Build up in the environment and can cause harmful health effects. Higher concentrations are seen in animals at the top of the food chain, such as predatory fish. • Bind strongly to soil, sediment, and biota. • Were previously used in fluorescent lighting fixtures, coolants and lubricants in transformers, capacitors, and other electrical equipment. 	<p><u>Hazards Identification</u></p> <p>Acute Exposure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May produce irritation of the skin, nose, throat, and lungs. • Damage to the liver. • Can cause coughing and/or difficulty in breathing. <p>Chronic Exposure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated or prolonged contact with skin may cause acne-like skin rash or darkening. • May cause liver damage, anemia, thyroid changes, damage to the reproductive and nervous systems. • High exposure can damage to the nervous or immune systems. • Liver cancer and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma are associated with exposure to PCBs. • Most people are exposed primarily through contaminated fish. PCBs can be passed from the mother to the fetus or through breast milk. 	<p><u>Stability & Reactivity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incompatible with strong oxidizers. <p><u>Handling & Storage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be stored in closed containers, in ventilated areas with appropriate air pollution control equipment.
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