



Do the *PCB Regulations* Apply to You?

What are polychlorinated biphenyls?

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are synthetic compounds with stable chemical properties that were used mainly in electrical components until the 1970s. Their stable chemical properties made them ideally suited for applications that required durability and resistance to heat and light. They were never manufactured in Canada, but were widely used in this country. The manufacture, process, import and offer for sale of PCBs have been prohibited in Canada since 1977. Recent regulations, which came into effect in 2008, implemented stricter deadlines on equipment already in use and in storage, in order to accelerate the elimination of PCBs from the Canadian environment.

How do I IDENTIFY PCBs?

PCBs in electrical equipment are in oil form, and were used as an insulating fluid for transformers and capacitors. They were also added to paints, caulking, sealants and asphalt, since they do not corrode easily, are fire-resistant, and add flexibility to these products when dried. The equipment containing PCBs is durable and has a service life of up to 50 years, or longer with retrofitting. Large quantities can be found in this equipment still in use, placed in storage, and in products that were improperly disposed of.

On the reverse side, there are examples of the types of equipment that may contain PCBs.

Why are PCBs harmful?



PCBs are very persistent in the environment and in the living tissue of humans and animals. Available scientific data suggests they are probable human carcinogens, and they are toxic to fish at very low levels. If PCBs are burned in uncontrolled conditions, they produce dioxins and furans, which are highly carcinogenic compounds. Because of concern for the environmental and health effects of PCBs, federal regulations were enacted to protect the health of Canadians and their environment.

Do these Regulations affect me?

- 1 Was your building built before 1982?
- 2 Does your building have its own electrical equipment or an electrical room?
- 3 Has your electrical equipment been in place since 1982?
- 4 Are you a retirement residence, school, daycare centre, hospital, food processing facility or drinking water treatment plant?

If you answered yes to questions 1, 2 and 3—you may be subject to the Regulations. There are special provisions that apply to you if you also answered yes to question 4.

What type of equipment are PCBs found in?

PCBs and products containing PCBs are mainly used in the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. Listed below are descriptions of some of the equipment that may be found in or around older buildings, and pictures of what this equipment may look like.



Capacitors are devices that accumulate and store electrical charge and are found both inside and outside buildings. Because capacitors have multiple applications, their size, shape and appearance may vary. They may be mounted on panels, in boxes, on walls or on floors, individually or in banks.



Transformers take electricity of one voltage and change it to another voltage. They are widely used and found in a variety of locations. Transformers that use a liquid coolant, or “wet” transformers, may contain PCBs. Dry-type transformers will have air vents for cooling and do not contain PCBs.



Light ballast capacitors are found in fluorescent light fixtures. Ballasts manufactured prior to 1980 often contain high concentrations of PCBs. Under the Regulations, light ballasts may continue to be used until 2025, if they are in use on the day on which the Regulations came into force (September 5, 2008). If your building is undergoing renovations, please contact us or other knowledgeable sources to ensure that light ballasts are checked for PCBs before disposal.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

In general, the owners of the PCBs are legally responsible for their proper handling and disposal. There are reporting requirements for the storage, shipment and destruction of PCBs. For more information, see the website or contact Environment Canada (see below). The PCB Online Reporting System and information on how to use the system can be found at: <https://srbpc-pcbrs.ec.gc.ca/Connexion-Login.aspx>

For more information on the PCB Regulations and complying with the requirements:

Please contact your regional Environment Canada office if you have any questions or concerns:

Atlantic

Tel.: 902-426-8679

Email: PCB.ATL@ec.gc.ca

Quebec

Tel.: 514-496-7396

Email: lcpe.info.cepa-qc@ec.gc.ca

Ontario

Tel.: 416-739-4826

Email: EnviroInfo.Ontario@ec.gc.ca

Pacific and Yukon

Tel.: 604-664-9100

Email: PCB.PYR@ec.gc.ca

Prairie and Northern

Tel.: 204-983-1906

Email: PNRCompliancePromotion@ec.gc.ca

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