

Managing PCBs in Ballasts and Small Capacitors

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What are “PCBs”?

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) are a class of 209 man-made chemicals with varying toxicity, often used as an insulator in electrical equipment. PCB products range from thin, light-colored oils to yellow, viscous resins.

What are PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors?

Before 1979, PCBs were commonly used as insulators in electrical equipment, including fluorescent lamp ballasts and motor start capacitors. Although these ballasts and small capacitors may contain only relatively small amounts of PCBs, the PCBs are commonly in extremely high concentrations. PCB ballasts and small capacitors may be found in:

- fluorescent lamps
- mercury vapor lamps
- home appliances
- industrial equipment

How Can I Tell If My Ballasts and Small Capacitors Contain PCBs?

Manufacture of PCB-containing equipment was prohibited in 1979. You should assume that all ballasts and small capacitors contain PCBs unless:

- labeled “No PCBs” or
- known manufactured after 1979

How are PCBs Regulated?

The use, storage, and disposal of equipment containing PCBs are regulated by both state and federal requirements. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates the use, storage, and disposal of PCBs with concentrations of 50 parts per million or more (≥ 50 ppm) under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) regulations. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) regulates the storage and disposal of PCBs of ≥ 50 ppm under the Hazardous Waste Rules when they become waste.

What Should I Do If Ballasts or Small Capacitors Leak?

Assume that all leaking ballasts or small capacitors contain PCBs until proven otherwise. Leaking PCB items must be manifested and disposed of under TSCA requirements. TSCA spill cleanup requirements must also be met. For TSCA spill cleanup requirements, see MPCA hazardous waste fact sheet #4.48g, *PCB Spill Cleanup Policy*, available on the Web at

http://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/pubs/4_48g.pdf



Management Requirements for PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors in Minnesota:

• Disposal

Generators of intact PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors must ensure that the PCB wastes in these items are disposed of at a permitted TSCA or Hazardous Waste disposal facility or may ship these items to PCB Commercial Storers for consolidation and subsequent shipment to a disposal facility. Leaking PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors must be disposed of directly at a permitted TSCA or Hazardous Waste disposal facility.

• Transportation

All shipments of PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors must be accompanied by a hazardous waste manifest. Required manifest information is listed in MPCA hazardous waste fact sheet #4.48e, *Manifest Requirements for Shipping PCB Wastes*, available on the Web at http://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/pubs/4_48e.pdf Generators may transport PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors in their own vehicles or use a commercial transporter. All transportation must also comply with DOT packaging and vehicle requirements.

• Storage and Labeling

PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors must be stored in compliance with TSCA requirements. These requirements are listed in MPCA hazardous waste fact sheet #4.48c, *Storage and Disposal of PCB-Contaminated Equipment and Wastes*, available on the Web at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hw4-48c.pdf>

• Reporting/Licensing

All generators of >100 pounds/year of total hazardous waste, including intact or leaking PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors, must report their hazardous waste generation to the MPCA and obtain a Hazardous Waste Generator License. Generators not currently

licensed should report their generation using MPCA hazardous waste form #7.09, *Notification of Regulated Waste Activity*, available on the Web at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/publications/w-hw7-09.pdf>

Generators in the Seven-county Minneapolis/St. Paul Metropolitan Area

Generators of intact PCB Ballasts and Small Capacitors in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington Counties should check with their county’s hazardous waste staff to determine whether additional management requirements apply within their county.

More Information

The MPCA and each Metropolitan County has staff available to answer waste management questions.

Metropolitan County Hazardous Waste Offices

Anoka County	(763) 422-7093
Carver County	(952) 361-1800
Dakota County.....	(952) 891-7020
Hennepin County.....	(612) 348-8100
Ramsey County	(651) 773-4466
Scott County	(952) 496-8177
Washington County.....	(651) 430-6655
Websites	http://www.co.[county name].mn.us

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Main Office (St. Paul)	(651) 296-6300
Toll free (all offices).....	1(800)-657-3864
Brainerd.....	(218) 828-2492
Detroit Lakes	(218) 847-1519
Duluth.....	(218) 723-4660
Mankato.....	(507) 389-5977
Marshall.....	(507) 537-7146
Rochester	(507) 285-7343
Willmar.....	(320) 214-3786
Website.....	http://www.pca.state.mn.us