

Even though the intentional production of **Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)** was banned in the U.S. in 1979, many manufactured and imported products still have significant levels of PCBs which can endanger our health and pollute the environment. PCBs in very low levels can be found in our bodies, our food, our homes, the air, the groundwater, and surface water. They find their way to our environment through many pathways, such as:



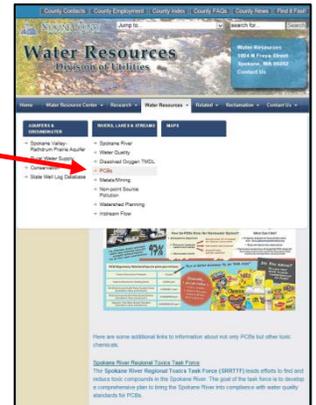
- ◆ **Consumer products** (e.g. personal care products, dyes in clothing, pigments in packaging and newsprint, oil, caulking, paint, fire retardant materials),
- ◆ **Wastewater Collection Systems** (residues from products rinsed off in showers, human waste, dyes washed from clothing, improper disposal of household chemicals),
- ◆ **Stormwater runoff** (carrying oil from our cars, paints, and other products from all types of surfaces into storm drains) and
- ◆ **Atmospheric deposition** (transferred from a variety of new and “legacy” sources via the air to the earth's surface)

What is being done?

Spokane County – as a member of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force – is collaboratively researching and learning more about the ubiquitous nature of PCBs in our environment and their impact on the Spokane River and the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer. Spokane County Water Resources staff will continue to update county residents as more information becomes available. Stay tuned!

Want to learn more?

Visit www.spokanecounty.org/water and locate the “PCB” page under “Rivers, Lakes and Streams”.



What can I do?

There is much yet to learn about PCBs before we’ll know all the ways we can help eliminate them from our environment.

Here are a few early tips:

- ◆ Be aware that a lot of common packaging contains PCBs because of the inks and dyes (the color **yellow** typically has higher concentrations). Be a consumer advocate for plain packaging that uses less ink.
- ◆ Don’t flush chemicals, solvents, oil, paints, etc.! The County’s treatment facilities do an excellent job of removing PCBs from wastewater, but let’s do what we can to keep them out of the wastewater collection system entirely.
- ◆ When shopping for motor oils, paints and inks, ask the seller if these products have been tested for PCBs. The seller may not initially have this information, but you’re contributing to awareness simply by asking the question.

Legacy PCBs
PCBs are extremely persistent, remaining in the environment long after they were first introduced.

- ◆ When it comes to personal diet, know your fish and other meats. PCBs that bio-accumulate in fish and other animal fats have been found to be carcinogenic. Be aware of consumption advisories for various fish, and choose lean cuts of meat. Allow fatty tissue of both to drip away when grilling/cooking. Choosing low-fat dairy products is also a good idea.
- ◆ Keep learning! Visit www.spokanecounty.org/water and locate the “PCB” page under “Rivers, Lakes and Streams”.
- ◆ When disposing of any possibly hazardous items, use the Spokane EnviroStars Waste Directory to learn how and where to dispose of them properly.

Need to get rid of waste?
Visit the Spokane EnviroStars Waste Directory!
www.SpokaneWasteDirectory.org



Consumers: Support businesses that display the EnviroStars Certified logo!
Businesses: Become EnviroStars Certified!
Both: Visit www.spokaneenvirostars.org to learn how!