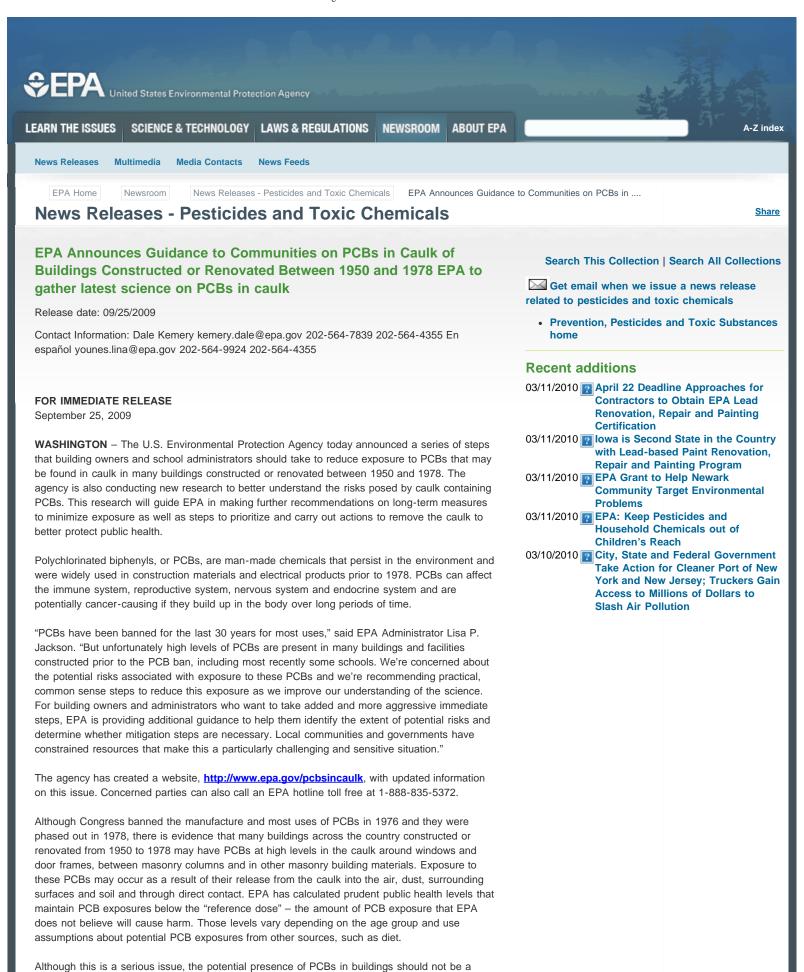
09/25/2009: EPA Announces Guidance to Communities on PCBs in Caulk of Buildings Constructed or Renovated Between 1950 and 1978



cause for alarm. If buildings were erected or renovated between 1950 and 1978, EPA

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recommends that owners implement steps to minimize exposure to potentially contaminated caulk in the following ways:

- · Cleaning air ducts
- · Improving ventilation by opening windows and using or installing exhaust fans where possible
- \cdot Cleaning frequently to reduce dust and residue inside buildings
- \cdot Using a wet or damp cloth or mop to clean surfaces

· Not sweeping with dry brooms and minimizing the use of dusters in areas near potential PCB-containing caulk

- · Using vacuums with high efficiency particulate air filters
- · Washing hands with soap and water often, particularly before eating and drinking
- Washing children's toys often

EPA also recommends testing peeling, brittle, cracking or deteriorating caulk directly for the presence of PCBs and removing the caulk if PCBs are present at significant levels. Alternately, the building owner can assume the PCBs are present and proceed directly to remove deteriorating caulk.

Building owners and facility managers should also consider testing to determine if PCB levels in the air exceed EPA's suggested public health levels. If testing reveals PCBs in the air above these levels, building owners should be especially vigilant in implementing and monitoring ventilation and hygienic practices to minimize exposures. Owners and managers are encouraged to retest PCB levels in air to determine whether these practices are reducing the potential for PCB exposures. Should these practices not reduce exposure, caulk and other known sources of PCBs should be removed as soon as practicable.

There are several unresolved scientific issues that must be better understood to assess the magnitude of the problem and identify the best long-term solutions. For example, the link between the concentrations of PCBs in caulk and PCBs in the air or dust is not well understood. The agency is doing research to determine the sources and levels of PCBs in buildings in the U.S. and to evaluate different strategies to reduce exposures. The results of this research will be used to provide further guidance to building owners as they develop and implement long-term solutions.

Where buildings were constructed or renovated between 1950 and 1978, EPA recommends that PCB-containing caulk be removed during planned renovations and repairs (when replacing windows, doors, roofs, ventilation, etc.). It is critically important to ensure that PCBs are not released to the air during replacement or repair of caulk in affected buildings. EPA is recommending simple, commonsense work practices to prevent the release of PCBs during these operations. More information can be found at http://www.epa.gov/pcbsincaulk.

EPA will work directly with owners and managers facing serious problems to help them develop a practical approach to reduce exposures and prioritize the removal of caulk.

Anyone seeking technical guidance should contact the EPA at 1-888-835-5372.

More information on PCBs in caulk: http://www.epa.gov/pcbsincaulk

More information on PCBs in the U.S.: http://www.cdc.gov/nceh or http://www.cdc.gov/atsdr

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