



## Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

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# Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in Building Materials

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## PCBs in Caulk Hotline

For additional information call  
1-888-835-5372

## Highlights

- [Factsheet: Practical Actions for Reducing Exposure to PCBs in Schools and Other Buildings: Guidance for School Administrators and Other Buildings Owners and Managers \(PDF\)](#) (4 pp, 504 K)
- [PCBs in Building Materials: Questions and Answers \(PDF\)](#) (18 pp, 440 K)
- [PCBs in Building Materials Diagram](#)

## Important Resources

- Find your EPA Regional PCB Coordinator
- [PCBs in School Research](#)
- [Steps to Safe Renovation and Abatement of Buildings That Have PCB-Containing Caulk](#)
- [PCB Guidance Reinterpretation](#)

## Overview

EPA believes that there was potential widespread use of PCB-containing building materials in schools and other buildings built or renovated between about 1950 and 1979. On this page, EPA is providing updated guidance for school administrators and building owners with information about managing PCBs in building materials to help minimize possible exposures to building occupants.

## Information on PCBs in Buildings Materials for School Administrators and Building Owners and Managers

[Factsheet: Practical Actions for Reducing Exposure to PCBs in Schools and Other Buildings: Guidance for School Administrators and Other Buildings Owners and Managers \(PDF\)](#) (4 pp, 504 K) - This factsheet provides concise information on how to manage and reduce exposures to PCBs in building materials.

[PCBs in Building Materials: Questions and Answers \(PDF\)](#) (18 pp, 440 K) - This questions and answers document is meant to help school administrators, building owners, managers and occupants better understand the types of building materials that may contain PCBs, the potential for building occupant exposure to PCBs, and how exposure to PCBs can be assessed and reduced.

[PCBs in Building Materials Diagram](#) - This diagram compliments the document *PCBs in Building Materials: Questions and Answers* on how exposure to PCBs can be assessed and reduced in school buildings.

[PCB-Containing FLBs in School Buildings: A Guide for School Administrators and Maintenance Personnel](#) - This page provides information to school administrators and maintenance personnel on the hazards posed by PCB-containing FLBs, how to properly handle and dispose of these items, and how to properly retrofit the lighting fixtures in your school to remove potential PCB hazards.

[Exposure Levels for Evaluating PCBs in Indoor School Air](#) - The PCBs in air levels were developed to maintain total PCB exposure below the oral reference dose (RfD) of 20 ng PCB/kg body weight per day. The RfD is an estimate of a daily oral exposure to the human population (including sensitive subgroups) that is likely to be without an appreciable risk of harmful effects during a lifetime.

## **Information for Contractors Working in Buildings that May Contain PCBs**

[Steps to Safe Renovation and Abatement of Buildings that Have PCB-Containing Caulk](#) This information is designed to assist building owners and abatement contractors who may be handling PCB-containing or PCB-contaminated building materials during planned renovation or repair activities or planned PCB abatement efforts in older buildings.

## **Test Methods for PCBs in Buildings**

### **Test Methods for Determining the Presence of PCBs in Indoor Air**

EPA has the following two approved methods for determining the presence of PCBs in indoor air:

- [Compendium of Methods for the Determination of Toxic Organic Compounds in Ambient Air - Compendium Method TO-4A \(high air volume\) \(PDF\)](#) (53 pp, 665 KB)
- [Compendium of Methods for the Determination of Toxic Organic Compounds in Ambient Air - Compendium Method TO-10A \(low air volume\) \(PDF\)](#) (37 pp, 288 KB)

Many old lighting systems contain ballasts manufactured with PCBs. These PCBs can get into the air if the ballast fails or ruptures. Replacement of old lighting systems with new, energy efficient systems will eliminate a potential source of PCBs.

### **Test Methods for Determining the Presence of PCBs in Buildings Materials**

EPA recommends that building materials suspected to contain PCBs be tested directly for the presence of PCBs and removed if renovations are planned in the building. The PCB regulations provide appropriate methods for testing. More information on these procedures can be found at:

- [Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste, Physical/Chemical Methods, SW-846](#)
- [Wipe Sampling \(PDF\)](#) (31 pp, 86K)

## **EPA Research of PCBs in Buildings**

EPA conducted [research](#) to address several unresolved scientific questions that must be better understood to assess the magnitude of the problem of PCBs in school buildings and identify the best long-term solutions. For example, the link between the concentrations of PCBs in building materials and PCBs in the air or dust is not well understood. The results of this research will be used to provide further guidance to schools and building owners as they develop and implement long-term solutions. [Read more](#) to address several unresolved scientific questions that must be better understood to assess the magnitude of the problem of PCBs in school buildings and identify the best long-term solutions. For example, the link between the concentrations of PCBs in building materials and PCBs in the air or dust is not well understood. The results of this research will be used to provide further guidance to schools and building owners as they develop and implement long-term solutions. [Read more](#)

## Where Can I Get More Information?

For more information on how to properly test for and address PCBs in caulk, call the EPA's Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) Hotline at 1-888-835-5372 or contact the [EPA PCB Regional Coordinator](#) for your state.