

HANDLING AND DISPOSAL of PCB & NON-PCB BALLAST

PURPOSE:

To ensure that employee's exposure to PCBs is minimized and that material containing PCBs are handled and disposed of in an environmentally sound manner.

BACKGROUND:

Polychlorinated bi-phenyls (PCBs) were used in the capacitors of fluorescent lamp ballasts and in the capacitors of high intensity, discharge (HID) lighting fixtures. PCBs were also found in other electrical equipment including common household appliances. PCBs were used in these items as they were an excellent insulator and they would not burn.

In 1978 however, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned the use of PCBs as they were found to pose a health risk to humans. Mineral oils and powdered materials replaced PCBs in lamp and ballast and capacitors manufactured after 1978 and these items generally bear a label reading "No PCBs".

The majority of ballasts and capacitors you will come into contact with in your day to day job activities pose no health risk. However, you may be working on ballasts and/or capacitors that contain very small amounts of PCB fluid. For handling these ballasts and capacitors, follow the handling and disposal procedures outlined below.

HANDLING PROCEDURES:

Procedure for removal of 'non leaking' PCB capacitors from fluorescent lamp ballasts. Employee will wear the following safety equipment:

1. Gloves made of chemical resistant neoprene coated, butyl rubber, or leather.
2. Safety glasses with side shields or full face shield.
3. Safety toed shoes or boots.

STEP 1:

Once removed from the fixture, the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) requires that PCB ballasts be stored in approved DOT drums. The drums should be stored inside the building. Outside storage is permitted if they are on an impervious surface, the drum lids are secured, and they are protected against weather and vandalism.

STEP 2:

Separate ballast by type (PCB, non-PCB) and visually check for leakers, and place into drums.

NOTE: Leaking PCB ballasts must be double bagged and placed in a drum containing at least 3 inches of vermiculite.

STEP 3:

Properly label drums PCB or Non PCB. Secure drum lid.

All protective equipment that comes into contact with any material leaking from a capacitor will be placed in proper containers for disposal. The employee shall wash his/her hands with soap and water when beginning a work shift, before a break, and upon completion of the work shift. No tobacco materials, food, or beverages will be permitted while working with lamp ballasts.

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that these handling and disposal procedures are fully carried out. The proper use of the prescribed safety equipment will protect the employee from the potential dangers of contamination from PCBs.