



# Too Precious to Pollute

## What should you know about PCBs?

Polychlorinated Biphenyls or PCBs were used from the 1920s through the 1970s in product manufacturing. Examples include fluids in electrical equipment, carbonless copy paper, electrical insulators, and electric appliances such as television sets and refrigerators. Broad use resulted in PCBs being present in the air, water, and soil.

Research showed PCBs impacting human health and the health of our environment. PCBs are a problem because they are toxic, persist in the environment, and accumulate in the tissues of fish, wildlife, and humans. PCBs were banned in the U.S. in 1979.

PCBs continue to be present in our environment. The City of Coeur d'Alene has taken proactive steps to remove PCBs from the environment:

- **Advanced Wastewater Treatment** - The City's treatment plant does an excellent job removing PCBs.
- **Educational Programs** - The City provides information on PCB reduction during school and adult learning tours at the treatment plant.
- **Street Sweeping** - The City keeps debris out of storm drains by sweeping the street and cleaning catch basins, along with the annual Leaf Fest pick-up program.

For more information on PCBs go to:

**City of Coeur d'Alene Wastewater Treatment:**  
<http://www.cdaid.org/index.php/departments/wastewater>

**Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force:**  
[http://srrttf.org/?page\\_id=1114](http://srrttf.org/?page_id=1114)

**Environmental Protection Agency:**  
<https://www.epa.gov/pcbs>

## What can you do to reduce PCB's and Toxins?

Don't ever flush chemicals or solvents down toilets or sinks.

Don't use the storm drain for waste disposal, such as rinsing paintbrushes or used motor oil.

Take your chemical wastes to the Ramsey Road Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection facility.

<http://www.kcgov.us/departments/solidwaste/hazmat.asp>

- **Home:** Oil-based paint, thinners, solvents, cleaning chemicals, stains, oil, insulation, fluorescent light ballasts, caulking, pool supplies, and some electrical equipment.
- **Lawn/Garden:** Pesticides, herbicides, rodent poison, garden dusts, and tree spray.
- **Auto:** Gasoline, diesel, antifreeze, contaminated oil, and carburetor cleaners.

## Helpful Tips

- Know that common packaging often contains PCBs because of inks and dyes (the color yellow can have higher concentrations).
- PCBs have been found to accumulate in fish and animal fats. Choose lean cuts of fish and meat and allow the fat to drip away when cooking. Low-fat dairy products are also a good choice.
- Ask retailers about the paint, motor oil, and inks you are buying to see if they've been tested for PCBs. Retailers may not be able to answer that question, but inquiries may increase awareness about PCB content in commercial products. Although PCBs are banned, products labeled non-PCB can contain PCBs below the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA) regulatory threshold.

This informational flyer is brought to you by the City of Coeur d'Alene. If you have any questions, or would like more information, please contact Torri Green at [tgreen@cdaid.org](mailto:tgreen@cdaid.org)



## What are PCBs and Toxins?

Hi. I'm Matty Moose. You might call me an environmental mooscot (get it) because my number one concern is making sure we all have a healthy place to live—whether it's our city, the forest, or the lakes and streams my fish friends call home. I want to tell you a story and share some information on what you can do to protect our environment.

A long time ago, before you were born, the United States made products like light bulbs, televisions, refrigerators, and paint using chemicals called Polychlorinated Biphenyls or PCBs. At the time, PCBs seemed harmless but scientists later discovered that PCBs were really bad for people and the environment including fish and wildlife...like me.

PCBs were banned in 1979 but are still present in some products today and trace amount of toxics are found throughout our environment in soils, air, and water. But it's not too late to clean up and protect the environment.

## Want to learn more about PCBs and Toxins?

The City of Coeur d'Alene offers tours for schools and private groups to demonstrate how the Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant works, and the work they are doing for the environment. To schedule a tour call 208.769.2281.



*Tours of Coeur d'Alene's Advanced wastewater facility, where students and groups learn about clean water and what the City is doing to remove PCBs*



*Local plumbers have also enjoyed tours of the City's Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility*



## How can you reduce PCB's and toxins in the environment?

Coeur d'Alene is a beautiful place to live and we want to keep it that way for people and wildlife, like me. There are lots of things you can do to protect our environment and minimize the spread of toxins and PCBs.

The easiest is something you **don't** do, don't flush the wrong things down the toilet other than the 4 P's (Poo, Pee, Puke, Paper). Putting the wrong things down the drain can damage the sewer system, cause sewer backups in your home, and sewer releases to the environment.



Take this quiz to see how waste-wise you are. See answers on at the bottom of the page.

- 1. What are the best ways to stay away from PCBs?**
  - a. Don't eat dirt.
  - b. Wash your hands.
  - c. Don't play with old appliances or electrical equipment.
  - d. Eat more vegetables.
- 2. Your parents have several half-used paint cans in the garage. To get rid of it you should:**
  - a. Throw it in the trash.
  - b. Pour it down the sink or toilet.
  - c. Take it to the transfer station to be disposed of properly.
  - d. Mix all the colors together and repaint your bike or room.
- 3. True or False: Yellow inks, dyes, and pigments may contain tiny amounts of PCBs.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  - c. No way!
  - d. All of the above

**Matty's Quiz Answers:**

1. a, b, & c; 2. c and/or d; 3. a