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Methods of Disposing Of PCB Pollutants Are Set by the EPA

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — Electrical parts and other materials containing PCBs, a group of hazardous industrial pollutants, will have to be disposed of in special ways beginning in April under new federal rules.

The regulations, issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, are a final version of rules the EPA proposed last May to deal with PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls.

PCBs are found mainly in heavy electrical parts used by utilities, but also in small electrical parts used in home appliances such as microwave ovens, air conditioners and fluorescent lights.

The chemicals are "a particularly serious human health hazard," according to the EPA, because they can cause damage to the human liver, kidneys and reproductive organs, and may also cause genetic and birth defects and cancer. The chemical is apparently dangerous even in small concentrations and is exceptionally long-lived.

Although U.S. manufacture of PCBs has been ended, the EPA estimates that about 95% of the 1.25 billion pounds of PCBs purchased by U.S. industry since 1929 is still either in active use or in the environment.

Under the new rules, all of this material will have to carry special labels, and must be disposed of using either high-temperature incineration or special federally approved chemical-waste landfills.

The rules specify that power transformers must be disposed of in the chemical landfills, while all liquids containing PCBs, including those drained from transformers, must be incinerated at high temperatures. Such incineration is the only disposal technique that destroys PCBs, according to the agency.

Large power capacitors being disposed of after Jan. 1, 1980, must be incinerated but may be buried in landfills before that date. Smaller electrical parts containing PCBs may be disposed of as normal municipal waste "for the present," the EPA said.

Sludge from municipal sewage treatment plants, and materials dredged from waterways, must also be specially handled in disposal if they contain PCBs. They may either be incinerated, put into the special landfills or disposed of in other ways approved by the EPA.

Raytheon Co. Acquires Firm

LEXINGTON, Mass. — Raytheon Co. said it acquired for cash Amrad Inc., Melrose Park, Ill., a maker of medical X-ray systems and parts. Raytheon didn't disclose the amount it paid for Amrad.

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