

PCB FILE

HAZARDOUS WASTE — A leak from this storage tank at German Boulevard and Dwyer Road in Frontenac could pollute Deer Creek, EPA officials say. The tank holds 10,000 gallons of waste oil contaminated with PCBs, a known carcinogen.

Safeguard on Oil Tank In Frontenac Sought

by J. Pultizer

The Environmental Protection Agency is acting to compel the Russell Bliss Drain Oil Service Co. to install safeguards against possible spills from a storage tank in Frontenac. The 10,000-gallon tank holds waste oil contaminated with polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs), a substance that has been shown to cause cancer in test animals, EPA officials said.

The tank is near German Boulevard and Dwyer Road. Officers of the Bliss firm would not comment on the allegations.

The EPA has scheduled a hearing Dec. 7 at 10 a.m. at the Civil Courts Building in St. Louis at which the firm must explain why it has no plans for spill prevention and for countermeasures, such as dikes to contain spills. Such safeguards are required under the Federal Clean Water Act to keep dangerous substances from contaminating water supplies.

Dan Shiel, a staff attorney from EPA's regional office in Kansas City, said that the firm must submit such emergency plans or face fines of up to \$5,000 for each violation.

EPA officials said they had been aware of the problem since April 1977, when inspec-

tors visited the site. The officials were uncertain where the waste oil came from, or how it was contaminated with PCBs.

Shiel said the agency's enforcement action was based only on contamination provisions of the Clean Water Act, and did not consider the separate hazard of the carcinogenic PCBs.

Officials said an EPA analysis of the waste oil indicated PCBs amounting to about 54 parts per million, well below the agency's current legal standard of 500 parts per million for defining a hazard. But a proposed change in the regulation would lower that standard to 50 parts per million, officials noted.

At this point, however, the agency cannot take action on the suspected cancer-causing agents in the oil, officials said.

But the PCBs are a major concern to Frontenac city officials and residents, said David Wilson, director of the Coalition for the Environment here.

Wilson said his group had received several calls from area residents asking about the tank and its contents. Frontenac officials also have begun legal action to force removal of the oil.

"Russell Bliss has a history of improper

disposal of waste materials in the area," Wilson said. "The coalition has dealt with him on several occasions. We believe the Missouri Department of Natural Resources has the authority to force Bliss to remove these wastes. We would hope also that they would investigate the possibility of criminal prosecution."

A list of 103 sites recently investigated by EPA officials included three other facilities in Missouri, the nearest a former U.S. Army chemical plant at Weldon Springs in St. Charles County.

EPA officials said the Weldon Springs site, which the Army closed nine years ago, is still dangerous because low-level radiation detected there could contaminate surface and ground water sources nearby.

Other dangerous wastes are stored at a disposal site operated by Conservation Chemical Co. of Kansas City at the confluence of the Missouri and Blue Rivers, EPA officials said.

The facility, established in 1959, handles waste fluids from steel manufacturing and other substances, including acids, zinc cyanide solution, chromium, nickel stripping solution and "pickle liquor" from nearby steel mills, another toxic fluid.

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