Westinghouse Electric Corporation

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PCBs

TO INDUSTRY PURCHASING EXECUTIVES

Since the late 1930's, the electrical industry has manufactured apparatus using askarels (which contain polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCB's) as a coolant and insulating fluid; and apparatus using mineral oils. Users have characteristically specified PCB's for use in installations where a high degree of fire resistance is required.

In late 1970 studies began to indicate that PCB's had a tendency to persist and accumulate in the environment. Since that time, Westinghouse has attached an additional identifying label to each askarel-filled transformer sold.

As a result of recent investigations, we have determined that some oil-filled transformers may contain varying concentrations of PCB's.

There is no operating problem with transformers that may have PCB's mixed with mineral oil. The electrical characteristics remain basically unchanged.

Currently there are no nationally established standards for allowable levels of PCB's in oil for closed electrical systems. A number of states have recently enacted legislation providing for special reporting, labeling and/or disposition of PCB's. Because legislation varies in different states, it is suggested that customers institute any special procedures which may be required for conformance.

In addition, when performing repair, routine maintenance or disposal, oil-filled transformers should be checked for the presence of PCB's. We also suggest that you check your own transformer oil storage and handling systems for possible presence of PCB's.

In order to determine the extent of the presence of PCB's in oil-filled environments, the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) has commissioned a study by a special task force. This study could include electrical apparatus as well as oil-storage and transportation facilities.

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