

Toxic Chemical Found In Lake Michigan Fish

CHICAGO (AP)—High levels of a toxic chemical have been found in certain Lake Michigan fish. They will be banned from interstate shipment if the levels continue at high levels, the Food and Drug Administration says.

Officials reported that the offending chemical is used widely in the electrical industry as a heat transfer liquid. They said the chemical has been collecting in the lake through sewage discharges and accidental spills since it was first marketed in 1959.

Officials said that if the fish are eaten regularly—once or twice a week—the chemical contents could

produce skin discolorations and liver disorders and, it is believed, they could adversely affect a person's recovery from other illnesses.

Donald Heaton, FDA regional director, said the ban could have a significant financial impact on three Chicago firms that smoke and ship chubs and on nine Wisconsin and Michigan firms. The majority of smoked chubs from Lake Michigan are shipped to New York. He did not identify the firms.

Heaton said the safety standard for the offending chemical is 5 parts per million and that recent samples showed levels of 5.5 to 6.5 in chubs, 13 in coho salmon and 28 in trout.