

January 22, 1980 (Approximate)

PCB spilled at pulp mill

By LEE BARNES
Staff Reporter

Weyerhaeuser officials confirmed Tuesday that there had been a PCB spill at the New Bern facility last week.

A spokesman for the company said that on Jan. 15, a local concrete truck backed into one of the pulp mill's transformers, breaking part of the transformer open, spilling a PCB-oil mix.

PCB is mixed with oil and used in transformers as an insulation agent. PCB — polychlorinated biphenyls — has been linked with cancer in laboratory animals and was the subject in 1978 and 1979 of intense publicity when a New York-based firm was alleged to have dumped PCB-laced oil along 210 miles of eastern N.C. roads.

TRUCK HIT TRANSFORMER

In the incident at Weyerhaeuser, the truck hit the transformer during repairs to the foundation of a substation building at the pulp mill. A Weyerhaeuser spokesman, in a prepared statement, said

Tuesday that the spilled PCB was drained into a sand and cement mixture.

"The PCB was mixed into about 55 cubic yards of sand and cement, which is a lot of cement," said Weyerhaeuser spokesman Ed Kirk. "At the present time, about 95 percent of the spill has been recovered and removed in approved drums for disposal."

Kirk said the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had been notified "immediately" after the spill.

"Tests are being conducted to insure that all material has been removed in a manner to meet state and federal requirements," said Kirk. "We continue to monitor the clean-up operation."

Kirk said the drums will not be disposed of in Craven County, but would be taken to an unnamed EPA-approved site for disposal.

Kirk could not say if any legal action was contemplated against the concrete company that owned the truck in question.

"That's a matter involving our legal department," he said.

Kirk could not identify the concrete company involved in the incident.