

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Environment Directorate

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RESTRICTED

Paris, 8th September, 1972

To: National Delegations

[Copy to Members of the
Environment Committee]

Dr. Ing.

NOTIFICATION AND CONSULTATION OF MEASURES
FOR CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES AFFECTING MAN
OR HIS ENVIRONMENT

Administrative Control Measures Concerning
Polychlorinated Biphenyls in Japan

In accordance with the Council Resolution C(71)73(Final), the Japanese delegation hereby notifies a set of Administrative Control Measures recently taken regarding the production, importation, and use of PCBs.

- ACTION REQUIRED :
1. National Delegations are invited to transmit the attached Notification to their national authorities concerned with the above matter.
 2. If these authorities wish to comment on the Japanese Notification, these comments should be addressed, via National Delegations, to the Environment Director, O.E.C.D., 2, rue André Pascal, 75775 PARIS-CEDEX 16, France to arrive, if possible, before 8th November, 1972.

1. PCBs are not a poison which takes effect immediately, but because of their low degradability, they have caused significant environmental pollution. It is therefore necessary to prevent the further discharge of PCBs.

2. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has requested the industries concerned to stop using PCBs in an open system. The necessary measures have been taken by the industries concerned in response to these official requests.

- Main items covered by the requests -

(a) Manufacturers:

- (1) March 1971 : Makers of pressure-sensitive copying papers should no longer use any PCBs for pressure-sensitive papers.
- (2) December 1971 : Firms processing waste paper should cease collecting and recovering PCBs contained in pressure-sensitive papers.
- (3) January 1972 : Makers of paints and adhesives should cease using PCBs for products to be used in open systems.
- (4) March and April 1972 : Makers of electrical equipment such as transformers and capacitors, and of heat exchangers, should cease to use PCBs by 1st September, 1972 at the latest in the case of equipment from which PCBs cannot be totally recovered. (In the case of heat exchangers, the time limit was 1st July, 1972).

(b) Importers:

Importers of equipment using PCBs should cease to import such items except in cases where perfect recovery of PCBs can be ensured.

(c) Users:

Users of equipment which uses PCBs in a closed system, such as transformers, capacitors and heat-exchangers, should not install such equipment except when perfect recovery of PCBs can be ensured.

3. Recovered PCBs are to be burned at high temperature.

In addition, provisional standards for foodstuffs which contain PCBs are being considered by the Ministry of Health and Welfare as a matter of urgency. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health and Welfare are promoting a survey of the pollution situation and a study on the methods for analysing PCBs.

4. Kaneouchi Chemical Co. Ltd. have been producing PCBs since 1954, and Mitsubishi-Monsant Chemical Co. Ltd., since 1969. These two companies have voluntarily stopped production because of the significance of PCBs in environmental pollution.

- Dates of production shut-down:

Mitsubishi-Monsant Chemical: March 1972

Kaneouchi Chemical: June, 1972

5. The "Yanomi oil disease" was the case in which PCBs directly affected the human body.

- Outline of "Yanomi oil disease" case. Between the summer of 1968 and the spring of 1969, 1,014 people in western parts of Japan who had eaten rice bran oil (known as Kanemi Oil) were poisoned and 10 of them died. The symptoms were serious exanthema, fatigue, headache and so on.

This happened because the PCB used as heat-transformer medium in the de-odorization heating process, leaked from defective pipework and mixed with the product.

6. Pollution by PCBs attracted public attention in Japan when these chemicals were found in fish in Tokyo Bay and Seto Inland Sea. The authorities now fear that certain damage to the human body may gradually take place by eating fish which are becoming increasingly contaminated by PCBs that have already been discharged.