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PCB pollution is extensive

Fish and other edible marine life and their processed products sampled in the Tokyo area have been found to be polluted by polychlorinate biphenyl (PCB), the Tokyo Metropolitan Government reported recently.

This was the first official finding by a Japanese municipal administration.

While just how PCB gets into human or animal bodies or how it is affecting their health is still unknown, the metropolitan administration at least plans to seek rigid Central Government control on the known use of PCB in the manufacture of pressure-sensitive "no-carbon" duplicating paper and other purposes, including paint and plasticizer production, besides continuing its research. PCB also is applied to making electric insulators, but industries concerned are already taking care of the matter.

According to the metropolitan administration report, a nine-month check on local fish, shellfish, processed fishery products, dairy products, meat and other foodstuffs and paper since last May has shown that PCB was present in 146 samples of 51 varieties, more than half of 333 samples of 97 kinds under study.

The most surprising was a maximum content of 812.5 parts per million (PPMs) found in the fat of a bass-like species of fish caught in Tokyo Bay. The bay fish samples averaged 100 to 110 PPMs.

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