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G.E. Admits A Chemical Felled Workers

The General Electric Corporation has admitted that over a period of 15 years 65 of its workers in two upstate plants became ill, probably because of exposure to the toxic chemical PCB.

There is a growing concern nationally about PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) because of new evidence that it is dangerous to humans and easily transmitted over great distances.

The chemical goes into the atmosphere from factories, apparently evaporates and returns to earth in precipitation. It had been found to have caused stillbirths, miscarriages and skin diseases in humans, if taken in sufficient quantities.

The New York case involving General Electric arises from hearings held by the State Department of Environmental Conservation, which in September ordered General Electric to stop discharging the chemical into the Hudson River by next September. State researchers said they have found PCB in high levels in fish taken from the Hudson River below the General Electric plants, though there is no evidence such fish have caused death or illness in the New York area. The company uses PCB in making electronic parts.

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