

Chemical's Use Is Restricted By Monsanto

Monsanto Co., the only United producer of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), has taken steps to restrict use of the industrial chemical.

Howard L. Minckler, a Monsanto vice president, said the restriction program was begun voluntarily two years ago because of evidence that "PBC is a persistent chemical which builds up in the environment."

He denied that the action was taken because of recent reports that PCB can induce birth defects in laboratory animals. He said that PCB toxicity studies sponsored by Monsanto had failed to produce such effects. The only reason for the St. Louis firm's action is because it is a persistent chemical, he said.

PCB was developed for use as a coolant in electrical transformers and in heating and cooling systems. Minckler said Monsanto would continue to sell PCB for use in such closed systems.

However, it is discontinuing sales of the chemical in so-called open systems like adhesives, sealants, rubber compounds and paints.