

25-108 ELECTRICAL
WEEK
WEEKLY

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BACONS

1800 UTILITIES TO WORK WITH RTE IN TESTING SUBSTITUTE FOR PCB as insulating fluid in fire-resistant transformers. An RTE source said last week that a number of utilities have indicated their willingness to order transformers filled with what RTE says is an environmentally safe and much cheaper fluid than the toxic and non-biodegradable polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) now used in the special transformers. RTE's objective is to accumulate field data and experience on transformers using its coolant, which it calls RTEMP. Electric utilities and manufacturers of capacitors and fire-resistant transformers have agreed to cooperate with the federal Environmental Protection Agency to phase out use of PCBs. RTE says that its RTEMP, like the silicone-based PCB substitute developed by Dow-Corning, is self-extinguishing at transformer operating temperatures, has a dielectric strength comparable to PCBs, and does not emit poisonous fumes associated with the combustion of PCBs.

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