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Spilled PCB chemicals being cleaned up

Removal of soil saturated with polychlorinated biphenayl from an area of the Renton Municipal Airport was to be completed today, the State Department of Ecology reported.

Between 66 and 100 gallons of the toxic liquid soaked into the ground to a maximum depth of about 24 inches Monday when an electrical transformer was cracked during repair work.

Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) is a component of fluids used to cool transformers. It is used because it is nonflammable.

A department spokesman said the Cochran Electric Co., which was repairing the transformer, has accepted responsibility for the spill and has provided men and material for the clean up.

Craig Baker, of the department's Redmond office, said the fluid saturated an area of gravel soil about 15 feet by 18 feet. It soaked down to an impervious clay layer.

The soil was to be excavated today and absorbant materials were to be used to pickup PC puddled on the clay level. Baker said some test borings may be made to determine if the chemical has soaked into the clay.

The excavated soil was to be packed in barrels and will be sent to a hazardous-material disposal area in Idaho, along with PCB-saturated silt and muck being dredged from the bottom of the Duwamish Waterway by the Environmental Protection Agency.

About 100 gallons of PCB drained into the waterway at slip 1 of Federal Center South September 13 when a transformer was dropped and cracked.

Divers began dredging up the river sediment last Saturday. The sludge and water mix is being treated in a mobile advanced waste-treatment plant hauled here from New Jersey by the E. P. A.

Yesterday divers finished credging an area of 10,000 square feet in which the PCB had concentrated and E. P. A. officials thought work would be finished before Saturdty.

Tests of bottom samples, however, showed traces of PCB in areas that had been dredged. The divers will rework those bottom areas, E. P. A. said. Officials are not sure how long the work will take.

E. P. A. has a $100,800 budget for the cleanup work. Its contracts with divers and other firms involved in the dredging expire Saturday noon, along with the funds.

The agency has asked the Department of Defense to help pay for the work, but so far has not received an answer. That department is involved because the transformer was being moved by a private firm for an Army Corps of Engineers project at an Air Force base in Alaska.

Bayley to speak

King County Prosecutor Christopher Bayley will speak on "The Vindication of Justice and Mercy—Before 1984" at 8:30 p. m. tomorrow at the annual fund dinner of the East Shore Unitarian Church, Bellevue.

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regional facility and maintain cooperation with suburban districts. "So we and you will not have to stand up before the Legislature and shed one another's blood."

He referred to a proposed state law, never adopted, which would have required county-government concurrence in water-rate increases passed on by a municipality passed on by a municipality to suburban districts.

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