State To Test PCB Removal At Location In Warren County

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WARRENTON (AP) — The state Department of Transportation plans Thursday to see whether it can remove toxic PCBs from state highways without spreading them in dangerous amounts onto nearby land.

"This will be the first pickup of live or hot material," said Dave Kelly, assistant state secretary of public safety. "We've had some dry runs with simulated materials."

The tests along a one-mile stretch of N.C. 58 near [illegible] in Warren County will be designed to discover several things, including whether the pickup process will generate too much toxic dust and whether PCBs-laden dirt scraped onto the asphalt road can be picked up completely.

"This is a chance to confirm what we have tried with simulated material, and is believed to be a reasonable way to load it onto trucks," Kelly said.

Participants in the test and any observers who want to get closer than 300 feet will have to wear special protective suits and submit to blood tests, before and after the tests.

PCBs, polychlorinated biphenyls, were dumped along 270 miles of North Carolina roads. Two men from upstate New York have been charged in connection with the dumping.

State officials still haven't found a site to dump the wastes, once they're scraped up from the roadsides. Kelly said the material taken up in Thursday's test will be stored temporarily in a maintenance area near Warrenton.

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