



Queensland University of Technology

SAFE HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF PCB – CONTAINING EQUIPMENT (FLUORESCENT LIGHT FITTINGS)

For identification of PCB – Containing Capacitors please refer to information booklet for electricians and electrical contractors – Identification of PCB-Containing Capacitors – 1997 ANZECC page 4 item 3 entitled Identification of PCB-Containing Equipment.

Note: Ducon capacitors have a 4 digit date on their capacitors. The first two digits represent the week of manufacture and the final two digits the year of manufacture. Therefore '2573' represents the 25th week of 1973.

Handling Procedure

Small quantities of PCBs are usually found in sealed containers known as capacitors. PCB-containing capacitors are unlikely to pose a health risk, unless they become damaged and leak. Care must be taken when handling a damaged capacitor to ensure that spillage does not occur. The person handling the damaged capacitor should take the following precautions:

- Put on personal protective equipment, safety goggles and clothing before removing damaged capacitors;
- If capacitors are obviously leaking, wear gloves that are made of materials that are resistant to PCBs, such as Viton, polyethylene, polyvinyl alcohol (PVA), polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), butyl rubber, nitrile rubber, or neoprene. Mid-arm length gauntlets may be required;
- DO NOT** use gloves made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or natural rubber (latex).
- Use disposable gloves.
- When working with overhead equipment (eg. Fluorescent light fixtures), wear a full face shield and appropriate hair protection;

- Wash any non-disposable contaminated equipment with kerosene and collect the kerosene for disposal as a PCB-contaminated solvent;
- If PCB vapours are suspected (eg. PCB leaks onto a hot surface in a confined space), wear a suitable respirator. Use a twin cartridge type respirator suitable for chlorinated vapours. It is always prudent to ensure adequate ventilation. NOTE: PCBs do not vaporise readily at room temperature;
- Do not smoke; and
- After handling PCBs, even if gloves were worn, wash hands well in warm, soapy water before eating, drinking, smoking, handling food or drink, or using toilet facilities.

First Aid

If PCB contacts the eyes, immediately wash it out with copious amounts of running water for at least 10 minutes. Occasionally lift the upper and lower eye lids to ensure complete irrigation of the eye. Obtain medical attention immediately.

If PCB contact the skin, immediately remove all contaminated clothing. Wash the affected areas with warm, soapy water. Do not use kerosene to remove PCB from your skin or clothing. Obtain medical attention as soon as possible. PCB spills should be handled by first evacuation people not involved with the clean-up from the spill area. Everyone involved with the clean-up needs to take the precautions listed above in the handling procedures.

Clean-Up of Leaks

The procedure detailed below should be followed if any PCB leaks from capacitors, or if PCB-contaminated material, such as kerosene, is accidentally spilt.

Use an absorbent material (preferably commercial absorbent, kitty litter or a diatomaceous earth) to form a barrier to prevent any of the PCB from escaping into drainage systems or into the watercourse. Soak up the PCB with the absorbent material used to form the barrier.

Non-porous surfaces should be cleaned with an organic solvent, for example, kerosene, and the solvent collected and disposed of as a PCB-containing solvent.

All porous disposal clothing and the damaged capacitor which has been contaminated must be placed in a strong, sealed polyethylene bag, which is then to be placed in a sound, sealable metal drum. An absorbent material

Version 16/09/02

should be packed around the PCB equipment to absorb any leaks. The drum should then be sealed.

Any PCB-contained solvents from the clean-up must be stored in separate drums.

All drums must be adequately labelled '**PCB Waste**' together with the name of the equipment or material contained within each drum. Drums should be disposed through QUT's chemical disposal process. Contact Eric Martinez E Block GP Extension 1357.