



UCCS SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE

43. SAFE HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF PCB's

(For assistance, please contact [Environmental Health & Safety](#))

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) are highly toxic molecules that were used in insulating oil and/or potting material of some [lighting ballasts](#) manufactured prior to 1979. The occupational exposure limit for PCBs is extremely low; exposure can occur by absorption through the skin or ingestion. Most PCB containing material has been removed from the campus, but there is still a possibility of an isolated piece of equipment being present. Because of the high toxicity, ballasts containing PCBs should be handled with caution, especially if they are leaking.

Handling

The following will reduce the risk of exposure for workers who change out spent ballasts:

- ✓ PCB and non-PCB ballasts are identical in both size and shape. ONLY BALLASTS WITH A LABEL SPECIFYING "NO-PCBs" ARE PCB FREE.
- ✓ **Always wear safety glasses** to protect against debris falling into your eyes.
- ✓ **Ballasts can be hot.** Turn off the light for a few minutes before removing the ballast from the fixture. Hot ballasts can melt both the gloves on your hands and the plastic bags in which they are wrapped.
- ✓ **Contact [EH&S](#) immediately if leaking ballast leaks has contaminated adjacent areas** or other parts of the lighting fixture. This could require additional clean up.
- ✓ **Always wear nitrile, latex, vinyl or other light duty plastic gloves** while handling leaking PCB ballasts.
 - Take care not to touch other surfaces, tools, or skin while the gloves are on or while taking them off.
 - Remove gloves immediately after handling leaking ballast.
 - Immediately wash hands and other exposed skin with soap and water after removing gloves.
- ✓ **Wrap leaking ballasts in plastic and tape closed** to keep PCB contaminated material from contacting other surfaces.
- ✓ In the event the electrical ends or "tails" appear contaminated with PCB oil, wrap them in the plastic along with the ballasts and tape closed.
- ✓ **For disposal (prior to transferring to [EH&S](#)):**
 - **Place all potentially PCB contaminated gloves and other items in plastic bags,**
 - then in a 1- or 5-gallon can, bucket or drum with a tight fitting lid.
 - **Clearly print on the container:**
 - "PCB Debris"
 - Date PCB contaminated material was placed in the drum
 - Location from which the material was taken
 - Individual who packed the material
- ✓ **Contact [EH&S](#)** to request a hazardous waste pickup of the container.

Last reviewed by Cynthia Norton on January 18, 2023