



PCBs in Schools: Health Risks and Framework

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PCBs can affect our health in many ways



Cancer

- Breast
- Liver
- Melanoma

Noncancer

- Immune
- Reproductive
- Nervous
- Endocrine

Vermont used a screening level to evaluate PCBs in schools from 2013 to 2020



- Indoor air is the pathway of concern for PCBs



- A standard calculation is used for developing screening levels for chemicals



- Used a school-specific exposure scenario to represent those who spend the most time in schools

Health and DEC have PCB data from five schools in Vermont

Pilot testing 2013-14

- Four schools tested
- 9% of samples exceeded the screening level (7 of 77)

Burlington High School 2020

- PCBs discovered as part of construction work
- 88% of samples exceeded screening level (38 of 43)
- Extensive contamination of building materials, regulated by EPA

PCB testing framework includes a building inventory, grouping of rooms, and school action levels

- The screening level is very close to background levels, meaning it could be hard to find and remove the sources of PCBs.
- An inventory and grouping process plus timelines for action led to the development of school action levels.
- School action levels protect the health of students and staff, while recognizing how common PCBs can be in indoor air.
- The school action levels accept a slightly higher cancer risk than the screening level, with the understanding that PCB sources will be identified and addressed.

Schools will have several options if PCBs are at or above the school action level

- Each school will receive an individualized letter detailing results and next steps.
- Schools can choose from several options to reduce exposures to students and staff while working with DEC to address the sources of PCBs.
- Schools must stop using rooms three times higher than the school action level.
- We will work with schools to find options that work for them, and support schools to communicate the results and health risks to staff and families.

Key takeaways about PCB testing in schools:

- We developed a realistic framework to comply with the required PCB testing.
- The framework protects the health of students and staff while keeping schools open.
- We will work individually with each school that has PCBs at or above the school action level.
- We are the first state in the nation to undertake such a program.
- **We will reduce PCBs in schools.**



Questions?