EWG Analysis of PCB Contamination in Schools

Thousands of American schools may be contaminated with unsafe concentrations of toxic polychlorinated biphenyls leaching from caulks, sealants and other aging building materials and fixtures.

PCBs, manufactured from the 1920s to the 1970s, were once used as insulators for electrical equipment, oils for hydraulic systems and motors, solvents, and components of fluorescent light fixtures.

These chemicals can cause a variety of health problems, including cancer, harm to the immune system, neurological damage, learning deficits, lowered birth weight and decreased thyroid hormone function.

Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., has calculated that up to 30 percent of American children in elementary, middle and high school may still be exposed to these dangerous industrial chemicals, despite a 1979 ban by the Environmental Protection Agency.

According to data provided to Markey's office by the EPA, which was also analyzed by EWG, over the past 10 years, the federal agency has received 286 reports of potential PCB contamination in school buildings in 20 states. These incidents ranged from the removal of a single fluorescent light fixture to large-scale remediation undertaken by some of the nation's largest school districts. In addition to schools, EPA reports also include colleges and universities where PCBs have been found.

This PDF document represents the EPA regional summary submitted in response to Sen. Markey's inquiry. The PDF contains information for those schools in a given EPA region where PCBs were detected. Please note that many states have not yet tested for PCBs in schools. Most school building constructed between the 1950s and the late 1970s are highly likely to test positive for these chemicals, potentially endangering the health of students and teachers.

Please note that this regional school summary prepared by EPA mistakenly included the John F. Kennedy Center, where PCBs have been found in window caulk and glazing.

EPA, Region 3 Schools with PCBs Associated with Building Materials, July 2016

Name of School and Location	Description of Situation	School Response	EPA Response
Montgomery County Public Schools - Farmland Elementary School, Rockville, MD Caulk, building materials and soil	Farmland Elementary School was built in 1962. Regulated levels of PCBs were found in the caulk from window frames and expansion joints, in the adjacent brick and in the soil below the expansion joints.	The Montgomery County School District submitted a 761.61(a) application for cleanup and disposal of the PCB-contaminated caulk, building materials, and soil on March 2, 2010.	A 761.61(a) approval was issued on March 8, 2010.
John F. Kennedy Center, Washington, DC Caulk and building materials	The Kennedy Center was built in 1971. Testing of window caulk and glazing was found to contain regulated levels of PCBs.	A 761.61(a) application for cleanup and disposal of the PCB-contaminated caulk and building materials was submitted on March 24, 2010.	A 761.61(a) approval was issued on April 15, 2010.
Montgomery County Public Schools - Beverly Farms Elementary School; Caulk, building materials, and soil.	Beverly Farms Elementary School was built in 1966, with additions added in 1968 and 1969. The building was slated for demolition for the summer of 2012. During due diligence sampling, regulated levels of PCBs were found in the caulk from window and door frames, expansion joints, window glazing, and soil outside of windows and expansion joints.	The Montgomery County School District submitted a 761.61(a) application for cleanup and disposal of the PCB-contaminated caulk, building materials, and soil on May 26, 2011.	A 761.61(a) approval was issued on June 23, 2011.
Montgomery County Public Schools - Paint Branch High School; Caulk and building materials	Paint Branch HS was built in 1969, with an addition added in 1987. The building was slated for demolition for the summer of 2012. During due diligence sampling prior to	The Montgomery County School District submitted a 761.61(a) application for cleanup and disposal of the PCB-contaminated caulk and building materials on May 22, 2012.	A 761.61(a) approval was issued on June 21, 2012.

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	demolition, regulated levels of PCBs were found in the caulk from window and door frames.		
Montgomery County Public Schools - Gaithersburg High School; Caulk and building materials	Gaithersburg HS was built in 1951, with additions added in 1956, 1961, 1965, 1971, 1977 and 1985. The building was slated for demolition for the spring of 2013. During due diligence sampling prior to demolition, caulk from window and door frames, vent frames and expansion joints was sampled and found to contain regulated concentrations of PCBs.	The Montgomery County School District submitted a 761.61 (a) application for cleanup and disposal of the PCB-contaminated caulk, building materials, and soil on May 22, 2012.	A 761.61(a) approval was issued on June 21, 2012.
Montgomery County Public Schools - Bel Pre Elementary School, Silver Spring, MD Caulk and building materials	Bel Pre Elementary School was built in 1968 with an addition added in 1993. The building was slated for demolition for the summer of 2012. During due diligence sampling prior to demolition, caulk from window and door frames, expansion joints, window glazing, and soil outside of windows and expansion joints was sampled and found to contain regulated concentrations of PCBs.	The Montgomery County School District submitted a 761.61(a) application for cleanup and disposal of the PCB-contaminated caulk and building materials on February 27 and March 8, 2013.	A 761.61(a) approval was issued on April 3, 2013.
Wyoming County School District – Wyoming County Career and Technical Center	The Wyoming County Career and Technical Center was built in 1974 with an addition	The Wyoming County School District submitted a 761.62(c) for the PCB containing caulk and	A strongly worded letter addressing the PCB containing caulk and a 761.61(c) approval addressing the PCB contaminated

and Herndon Consolidated Elementary and Middle School Caulk and building materials	added in 1987. Regulated levels of PCBs were found in the caulk from window and door frames and in the adjacent brick. The Herndon School was built in 1979. Regulated levels of PCBs were found in the caulk in the expansion joints and the adjacent brick.	61(c) application for cleanup and disposal of the PCB contaminated building materials at both schools on May 9, 2016.	building materials was issued on May 27, 2016.