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## **MEXICO'S SEMARNAT ISSUES NEW PCB MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

The Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico (SEMARNAT for its Spanish acronym) recently promulgated a standard establishing environmental protection specifications for Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB).

The new standard entitled Official Mexican Standard NOM-133-ECOL-2000, Environmental Protection-Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) Handling specifications, was published in the Official Journal of the Federation on December 10, 2001. The standard went into effect 60 days after its publication date, on February 8, 2002.

A number of classifications of PCB-containing materials are individually defined, including PCB equipment, PCB electrical equipment, PCB-contaminated equipment, PCB waste, PCB hazardous waste, and liquid and solid PCBs.

The new standard applies to all facilities where any of these PCB-containing materials or products are in existence, including hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities. PCB-contaminated materials are equipment or devices containing PCBs with a concentration greater than 50 ppm or 100g/100 cm<sup>2</sup>. Affected facilities must comply with the following requirements:

- Register as a PCB Hazardous Waste Generator with SEMARNAT using form INE-04-004-B.
- Submit a PCB inventory to SEMARNAT within three months of the standard's promulgation, and present a plan for decommissioning PCB materials within six months of the standard's effective date. The plan must abide by the elimination deadlines stipulated in the NOM.
- Keep a log of movements in and out of storage for PCB equipment, PCB electrical equipment, PCB-contaminated equipment, PCB waste, and PCB hazardous waste, including shipping manifests, total amounts of PCB shipped to disposal, destruction dates, and reports of related activities.
- Develop a written contingency plan and keep appropriate safety equipment for emergencies in case of PCB spills or accidents.
- Notify SEMARNAT in case of PCB spills or accidents.
- Keep records of controls, clean-ups and notifications to SEMARNAT in case of PCB spills or

accidents.

While some hazardous waste disposal restrictions for PCBs are already specified in NOM-052-ECOL-1993, which establishes the hazardous waste characteristics, identification procedure, classification, and listings, this new NOM also includes specific dates for elimination of all PCB equipment and PCB hazardous waste. Elimination is defined as a change in chemical structure, by which materials are no longer biphenyls or their concentration is less than 50 ppm.

Within one year of the standard's promulgation all PCB equipment, PCB electrical equipment, and PCB waste that was in storage before the NOM went into effect must be eliminated.

PCB equipment in operation in sensitive areas (where there is a risk of contact with the public or food), as well as PCB electrical equipment and PCB-contaminated equipment in use at rural, urban or industrial substations must be eliminated by December 31, 2008. All waste generated during the decommissioning process must be eliminated within nine months of the decommissioning date.

The standard also places a number of handling and storage restrictions on PCBs, defines specific labeling and marking requirements, and classifies certain electrical equipment. For instance, all fluorescent ballasts manufactured before 1980 or those without a manufacturing date are to be considered PCB electrical equipment for purposes of this NOM.

Hazardous waste transportation, treatment, and disposal require specific authorization from the federal environmental agency. Exports of PCB equipment or PCB contaminated equipment for purposes of disposal is prohibited. The standard sets maximum air emission, wastewater, and solid waste limits for PCB thermal, chemical and biological treatments, as well as soil remediation levels for PCB spills.

Finally, there is a provision in the NOM for SEMARANT to review the elimination deadlines two years after the effective date, based on the results of compliance.

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MexRegs.com  
Transforming Information into Knowledge  
3361 28th St.  
San Diego, California 92104  
(619)297-8060  
fax (619)297-1023

[members@mexregs.com](mailto:members@mexregs.com)

[www.mexregs.com](http://www.mexregs.com)

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