

## **PREVENTING EXPOSURE TO PCBs IN THE 10 MILE/LANGE/REVERE CANALS**

Updated from the Macomb County Health Department 2002 fact sheet by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Control, Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), and Macomb County Health Department.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is investigating the source of PCBs in the Ten Mile Drain system in St. Clair Shores. PCBs have been found in the sediments in the 10 Mile/Lange/Revere canals and the drain discharging to the canals. PCBs have also been found in fish sampled from the 10 Mile/Lange/Revere canals.

### Should the fish be eaten?

At this time, we advise that people not eat any fish from the 10 Mile/Lange/Revere canals. The results of analysis of fish samples from these canals strongly suggest PCB concentrations exceed the value that prompts “do not eat” advisories.

As a precaution, we also advise that people not eat carp and channel catfish from Lake St. Clair. For information about the consumption of other fish from Lake St. Clair, please consult the Michigan Fish Advisory\*.

### Should canal water be used for lawn irrigation?

As we advised in the September 2010 EPA fact sheet, “[Health Concerns and PCBs: Questions and Answers](#)”, you should wait until the PCB source is located and secured before using canal water in your yard. If you choose to use the canal to irrigate, position the water intake well above the sediment since PCBs stick to soil and sediment more easily than to water.

### Should I swim in the canal?

As also advised in the EPA fact sheet, you should wait until the PCB source is located and secured before swimming in the canals. As a general public health and safety issue, swimming should occur only at managed recreational areas where regular water quality monitoring and maintenance are conducted and where lifesaving personnel are present.

### What about other exposures?

The main way a person can be exposed to PCBs is by eating contaminated fish. Other ways that persons can be exposed to PCBs in the Ten Mile Drain Superfund site include breathing of airborne contaminants, direct consumption of and contact with contaminated soil and sediments.

- ✓ Air: During the emergency removal of the PCB-contaminated sediments in 2002, EPA conducted air monitoring. Very small levels of PCBs were detected occasionally in the air, but the concentrations were not harmful to health. It is not expected that there would be harmful concentrations of PCBs in the air currently.
- ✓ Soil: The EPA removed contaminated soils in the Bon Brae/Bon Heur area in 2006, which eliminated direct-contact concerns. EPA and its contractors are taking steps to prevent public exposure to soils being sampled as part of their current investigation.

- ✓ Sediment: People may be exposed to the sediment in the 10 Mile/Lange/Revere canals if they enter the canals to work on their boat slips or docks. To help protect the environment and the St. Clair waterway, we recommend not conducting activities in the canal that are likely to stir up and move sediments throughout the canal.

#### What about other canals?

When the PCBs were first discovered in the drain system in 2001, the Macomb County Public Works Office tested their outfalls in other canals along Lake St. Clair and found no PCB contamination.

Sediment sampling occurred in the Maple/Beach/10 Mile canals prior to dredging by the Corps of Engineers in 2010. Test results indicated no PCB contamination. Dredging permits require that sediments get tested to be sure they are disposed of properly.

Current information does not indicate contamination in other canals.

\*Updated, 2010. See [www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish](http://www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish).