

Dept. of Natural Resources: PCB contamination found at Rochester Park in Sheboygan Falls

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MADISON, Wis. – The city of Sheboygan Falls, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Department of Health Services (DHS), and Sheboygan County Health recently announced polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a human made group of chemicals, was detected in soil at Rochester Park in Sheboygan Falls.

The soil samples were collected at the park as part of an ongoing investigation at the Sheboygan River and Harbor Superfund Site. Preliminary test results indicate that PCB contamination is present in the soil near the surface in the southern portion of Rochester Park.

Before Rochester Park was created more than 40 years ago, the area was historically used as a landfill and is situated adjacent to the Sheboygan River and Harbor Superfund Site.

“The city of Sheboygan Falls is working closely with the DNR, DHS and Sheboygan County Health department on public notification and safety. After reviewing the data with the DNR and DHS on Thursday, April 7, we immediately reached out to Stantec to enlist their environmental expertise,” said Sheboygan Falls Mayor Randy Meyer. “Now that we are aware, we will fully identify the scope of the problem and implement a comprehensive solution, with the public health and welfare as our top priority.”

The city of Sheboygan Falls is working to ensure that appropriate measures are being taken to protect public health, such as installing advisory signage and restricting access to areas where PCB levels are highest.

Park visitors can further reduce possible exposure to PCBs and other harmful agents in soil by following soil safety best practices:

- Clean off soil from shoes, clothes, bikes, toys, discs and picnic blankets.
- Clean off soil from pets' fur and paws, and do not let them lick or eat soil.
- Wash hands after touching soil, cleaning off soil and before eating.

PCBs are a group of human-made chemicals that were used in hydraulic oils, metal-cutting oils, microscope lens oils, inks, dyes and carbonless copy paper, as well as coolants in electrical equipment. In 1977, the U.S. EPA banned the use of PCBs. PCBs break down slowly and can accumulate in the environment. PCBs can also build up over time in the fat of people and animals.

Exposure to high levels of PCBs over long periods of time may be harmful to health.

Visit DHS's website to learn more about PCBs and health: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/pcb.htm>

In 2014, a fish consumption advisory was issued in the Sheboygan River due to the presence of PCBs in fish: <https://widnr.widen.net/s/twtsfpnlch/undefined>

Additional information about the Sheboygan Harbor and River Superfund Site is available from the U.S. EPA: <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csinfo.-cfm?id=0505188>