

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper is written for a domestic and international audience, and it describes how to identify: PCBs, environmental hazards, hidden sources to look for, potential liabilities, and what to do if you find PCBs. PCBs are highly stable, toxic man-made organic compounds that persist in the environment and do not biodegrade under ordinary conditions. PCBs are among the twelve chemicals designated as persistent organic pollutants (POPs) by the UN Stockholm Convention, with 152 signatories, including the United States of America. However, PCB-containing electrical equipment remains in abandoned surface and underground mines worldwide, releasing PCBs into ground water and eventually into the ocean as the equipment deteriorates: PCBs bioconcentrate in phytoplankton, the basis of the ocean food chain, that produce about 50 percent of the atmospheric oxygen.