

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



# EPA and IDEM Consider Permit Renewal for Treatment

**Safety-Kleen Systems Inc.**

East Chicago, Indiana

June 2019

## Your opinion matters

EPA and IDEM will accept **public comments** about the proposed Safety-Kleen PCB treatment and storage approval through Aug. 31.

## For more information, to view approval documents, and to submit comments

On the web:

<https://www.epa.gov/pcbs/forms/safety-kleen>

or

<https://www.IN.gov/idem/5391.htm>

Mail, email, or contact these project managers:

### EPA

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## Approval documents can also be viewed at:

Robert A. Pastrick Library  
1008 W. Chicago Ave.  
East Chicago, Ind.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) are considering whether to renew permission for Safety-Kleen Systems Inc. in East Chicago, Ind., to store and treat hazardous polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, in used oil. Safety-Kleen has held a permit for PCB treatment and storage since 1998. The federal and state environmental agencies will accept public comments about the proposed permit approval through Aug. 31 and hold informational meetings on July 16 (*see box below for details*).

Safety-Kleen collects used oil from oil change facilities, automotive shops, car dealerships, industry, and do-it-yourself oil pickup centers. Safety-Kleen does not pick up oil that is known to contain PCBs, but occasionally PCBs are discovered in the used oil. The proposed renewal of Safety-Kleen's PCB approval is to allow the company to treat the contaminated oil.

Safety-Kleen uses hydrotreatment to remove impurities from the oil such as chlorine, sulfur, nitrogen, oxygen, and metals. The hydrotreatment process also destroys the PCB molecule. The proposed permit approval also allows storage of up to 377,000 gallons of PCB waste in bulk containers and 3,575 gallons in non-bulk containers. A modification request in the renewed permit calls for an increase of the hydrotreater feed rate from 120 gallons or less per minute (gpm) to 175 gpm or less for the treatment of PCB-contaminated oil. The same feed rate is used for non-PCB oil. Safety-Kleen conducted a demonstration test in January and March 2016 with EPA and IDEM representatives present. The test proved the hydrotreater destroys PCBs to the EPA performance standard of less than 2 parts per million PCBs at the 175 gpm feed rate.

## Public Information Meeting and Hearing

Tuesday, July 16

Robert A. Pastrick Library  
1008 W. Chicago Ave.  
East Chicago, Ind.

The approval document outlines specific conditions under which Safety-Kleen must operate the facility. Before making a final decision on Safety-Kleen's PCB approval, EPA and IDEM are taking comments and hosting a joint public hearing.

**4 p.m.** – Safety-Kleen officials will give a **presentation** followed by questions and answers.

**5 p.m.** – EPA and IDEM representatives will host an **information session**.

**6 p.m.** – EPA and IDEM will hold a formal **public hearing**.

## Questions and answers

### What are EPA and IDEM announcing?

This action is a proposed renewal and modification of the Safety-Kleen Systems Inc. PCB approval for alternative disposal and commercial storage. The agencies are soliciting technical comments from the public on the proposed approval prior to renewing it. The permit is issued under the authority of the federal Toxic Substances Control Act, or TSCA.

### Where is Safety Kleen located?

601 Riley Road, East Chicago, Ind.

### Why are EPA and IDEM proposing to make this decision?

IDEM and EPA experts reviewed Safety-Kleen's application and participated in a demonstration of the hydrotreater and found the treatment of PCBs by hydrotreatment is technically sound and does not pose an unreasonable risk to public health or the environment. Hydrotreatment of used oil to destroy PCBs is preferred to incineration because it recycles the oil, and there are no air emissions from the process. In addition, EPA worked extensively with Safety-Kleen on its test procedures of the final product.

### Were there no other options?

Incineration is an option to dispose of PCB oil. Burning requires potentially having to transport the oil long distances, and the oil is not recycled. In addition, the regulations allow for PCB oil between 50 and 500 parts per million (ppm) to be burned in a high-efficiency boiler, except that these facilities generally do not accept PCB-contaminated used oil. Therefore, the PCB-contaminated used oil is usually incinerated regardless of the concentration.

### What are PCBs?

Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, are a group of man-made organic chemicals consisting of carbon, hydrogen and chlorine atoms. PCBs were domestically manufactured from 1929 until manufacturing was banned in 1979. PCBs were used in hundreds of industrial and commercial applications, including insulating oil in electrical equipment such as transformers and capacitors. PCBs have been identified as probable human carcinogens and cause a variety of non-cancer health effects (*for more information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/pcbs/learn-about-polychlorinated-biphenyls-pcbs#healtheffects>*).

### What type of safeguards will be at the site?

There are several safeguards as listed below.

- There is an operator that constantly monitors the hydrotreatment system during operation (*temperature, pressure, and flow rate*).
- There are alarms on the system to notify the operator if parameters are being exceeded (*temperature, pressure*) and a system emergency shutdown procedure.
- Safety-Kleen has a training system in place for its employees regarding safe operations.
- There is a security system at the facility.
- There is secondary containment for all oil storage.
- Safety-Kleen has an emergency contingency plan and communication system in place. This includes notifications to EPA and IDEM of any emergencies during treatment of PCBs.
- Safety-Kleen is required to maintain financial assurance for closure.
- Safety-Kleen is inspected by IDEM annually.

### Is there any benefit?

The PCBs in the oil are destroyed, and the oil itself is recycled into a product to be reused. The hydrotreatment process is totally enclosed with no air emissions. This is an alternative to incineration and other energy recovery options that do not recycle the oil and potentially release air emissions.

### More contacts

For questions or for more information about the Safety-Kleen proposed PCB approval, contact these community involvement specialists:

#### EPA

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