

§ 509.7

changes that might affect the appropriateness of the tolerance include anticipated improvements in good manufacturing practice that would change the extent to which use of the substance is unavoidable and anticipated studies expected to provide significant new toxicological or use data.

(c) A regulatory limit for an added poisonous or deleterious substance in any food may be established when each of the following criteria is met:

(1) The substance cannot be avoided by current good manufacturing practices.

(2) There is no tolerance established for the substance in the particular food under sections 406, 408, or 409 of the act.

(3) There is insufficient information by which a tolerance may be established for the substance under section 406 of the act or technological changes appear reasonably possible that may affect the appropriateness of a tolerance. The regulatory limit established represents the level at which food is adulterated within the meaning of section 402(a)(1) of the act.

(d) An action level for an added poisonous or deleterious substance in any food may be established when the criteria in paragraph (b) of this section are met, except that technological or other changes that might affect the appropriateness of the tolerance are foreseeable in the near future. An action level for an added poisonous or deleterious substance in any food may be established at a level at which the Food and Drug Administration may regard the food as adulterated within the meaning of section 402(a)(1) of the act, without regard to the criteria in paragraph (b) of this section or in section 406 of the act. An action level will be withdrawn when a tolerance or regulatory limit for the same substance and use has been established.

(e) Tolerances will be established under authority appropriate for action levels (sections 306, 402(a), and 701(a) of the act, together with section 408 or 409 of the act, if appropriate) as well as under authority appropriate for tolerances (sections 406 and 701 of the act). In the event the effectiveness of a tolerance is stayed pursuant to section 701(e)(2) of the act by the filing of an objection, the order establishing the

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tolerance shall be deemed to be an order establishing an action level until final action is taken upon such objection.

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§ 509.7 Unavoidability.

(a) Tolerances and action levels in this part are established at levels based on the unavoidability of the poisonous or deleterious substance concerned and do not establish a permissible level of contamination where it is avoidable.

(b) Compliance with tolerances, regulatory limits, and action levels does not excuse failure to observe either the requirement in section 402(a)(4) of the act that food may not be prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions or the other requirements in this chapter that food manufacturers must observe current good manufacturing practices. Evidence obtained through factory inspection or otherwise indicating such a violation renders the food unlawful, even though the amounts of poisonous or deleterious substances are lower than the currently established tolerances, regulatory limits, or action levels. The manufacturer of food must at all times utilize quality control procedures which will reduce contamination to the lowest level currently feasible.

[42 FR 52821, Sept. 30, 1977, as amended at 55 FR 20786, May 21, 1990]

§ 509.15 Use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) in establishments manufacturing food-packaging materials.

(a) Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) represent a class of toxic industrial chemicals manufactured and sold under a variety of trade names, including: Aroclor (United States); Phenoclor (France); Colphen (Germany); and Kanaclor (Japan). PCB's are highly stable, heat resistant, and nonflammable chemicals. Industrial uses of PCB's include, or did include in the past, their use as electrical transformer and capacitor fluids, heat transfer fluids, hydraulic fluids, and plasticizers, and in formulations of lubricants, coatings, and inks. Their unique physical and chemical properties and widespread, uncontrolled industrial applications

have caused PCB's to be a persistent and ubiquitous contaminant in the environment, causing the contamination of certain foods. In addition, incidents have occurred in which PCB's have directly contaminated animal feeds as a result of industrial accidents (leakage or spillage of PCB fluids from plant equipment). These accidents in turn caused the contamination of food products intended for human consumption (meat, milk and eggs). Investigations by the Food and Drug Administration have revealed that a significant percentage of paper food-packaging material contains PCB's which can migrate to the packaged food. The origin of PCB's in such material is not fully understood. Reclaimed fibers containing carbonless copy paper (contains 3 to 5 percent PCB's) have been identified as a primary source of PCB's in paper products. Some virgin paper products have also been found to contain PCB's, the source of which is generally attributed to direct contamination from industrial accidents from the use of PCB-containing equipment and machinery in food-packaging manufacturing establishments. Since PCB's are toxic chemicals, the PCB contamination of food-packaging materials as a result of industrial accidents, which can cause the PCB contamination of food, represents a hazard to public health. It is therefore necessary to place certain restrictions on the industrial uses of PCB's in establishments manufacturing food-packaging materials.

(b) The following special provisions are necessary to preclude the accidental PCB contamination of food-packaging materials:

(1) New equipment or machinery for manufacturing food-packaging materials shall not contain or use PCB's.

(2) On or before September 4, 1973, the management of establishments manufacturing food-packaging materials shall:

(i) Have the heat exchange fluid used in existing equipment for manufacturing food-packaging materials sampled and tested to determine whether it contains PCB's or verify the absence of PCB's in such formulations by other appropriate means. On or before Sept. 4, 1973, any such fluid formulated with PCB's must to the fullest extent pos-

sible commensurate with current good manufacturing practices be replaced with a heat exchange fluid that does not contain PCB's.

(ii) Eliminate to the fullest extent possible commensurate with current good manufacturing practices from the establishment any other PCB-containing equipment, machinery and materials wherever there is a reasonable expectation that such articles could cause food-packaging materials to become contaminated with PCB's either as a result of normal use or as a result of accident, breakage, or other mishap.

(iii) The toxicity and other characteristics of fluids selected as PCB replacements must be adequately determined so that the least potentially hazardous replacement is used. In making this determination with respect to a given fluid, consideration should be given to (a) its toxicity; (b) the maximum quantity that could be spilled onto a given quantity of food before it would be noticed, taking into account its color and odor; (c) possible signaling devices in the equipment to indicate a loss of fluid, etc.; and (d) its environmental stability and tendency to survive and be concentrated through the food chain. The judgment as to whether a replacement fluid is sufficiently non-hazardous is to be made on an individual installation and operation basis.

(c) The provisions of this section do not apply to electrical transformers and condensers containing PCB's in sealed containers.

Subpart B—Tolerances for Unavoidable Poisonous or Deleterious Substances

§ 509.30 Temporary tolerances for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's).

(a) Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) are toxic, industrial chemicals. Because of their widespread, uncontrolled industrial applications, PCB's have become a persistent and ubiquitous contaminant in the environment. As a result, certain foods and animal feeds, principally those of animal and marine origin, contain PCB's as unavoidable, environmental contaminants. PCB's are transmitted to the food portion