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**NEW YORK STATE
- HUMAN HEALTH FACT SHEET -**

**Ambient Water Quality Value
Based on Human Consumption of Fish**

SUBSTANCE: Polychlorinated biphenyls **CAS REGISTRY NUMBER:** 1336-36-3

AMBIENT WATER QUALITY VALUE: 1×10^{-6} ug/L

BASIS: Bioaccumulation

INTRODUCTION

This value applies to the water column and is designed to protect humans from the effects of waterborne contaminants that may bioaccumulate in fish; it is referred to as a Health (Fish Consumption) or H(FC) value. The H(FC) value is based on three components, the toxicity of the substance to humans, the extent to which it bioaccumulates in fish, and the rate of fish consumption.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

A. Toxicity

The toxicity of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) relevant to human health is described in a separate fact sheet (NYS, 1997). That fact sheet, which supports an ambient water quality value for protection of sources of potable water, derives a human dose of 2.5×10^{-3} ug PCBs/kg · day) based on a slope of 0.4 [mg/(kg · day)]⁻¹. However, as described in U.S. EPA's (1996) reassessment of PCB carcinogenicity, a higher slope of 2 [mg/(kg · day)]⁻¹ is recommended for exposure through the food chain, which tends to concentrate the persistent, highly chlorinated PCB congeners. Thus, the latter slope is used as the basis for the toxicity component of this H(FC) value.

B. Bioaccumulation

A measurement of bioaccumulation is necessary to derive a value to protect human consumers of fish. Bioaccumulation is the process by which a substance becomes concentrated in an organism through the organism's exposure to the contaminant in food and water. Bioaccumulation is represented numerically by a bioaccumulation factor, or BAF, which is the ratio of the concentration of a substance in the organism to that in the water column.

The term bioconcentration also describes the concentration of a substance in an organism relative to the concentration in the water column. A bioconcentration factor (BCF), however, is measured with exposure to the contaminant by water only. A BCF may be equal to the BAF for many substances, but can substantially underestimate it for others.

U.S. EPA (1995a) has promulgated, as final Federal regulations, procedures for deriving bioaccumulation factors. U.S. EPA (1995b) presented BAFs for PCBs; these were subsequently revised (U.S. EPA, 1997).

A key aspect of U.S. EPA's procedure is that bioaccumulation is believed to be related to the concentration of freely dissolved substance. Hydrophobic organic substances are considered to exist in water in three phases: freely dissolved, sorbed to dissolved organic matter and sorbed to suspended solids (U.S. EPA, 1995b). Because BAF determinations are often based on measurements of total or dissolved substance, a measured BAF must be adjusted based on the estimated fraction of freely dissolved material (f_{fd}). In addition, because measured BAFs are determined based on the percent lipid in the species studied, they are adjusted, or normalized, to 100% lipid to allow comparison of BAFs derived from species with different tissue lipid fractions. A BAF adjusted for both fraction freely dissolved and normalized to 100% lipid is referred to as a "baseline BAF."

Although bioaccumulation is related to the freely dissolved substance, water quality criteria are based on total substance. A baseline BAF, therefore, is readjusted to a final BAF by the expected fraction freely dissolved and fish lipid content for the waters for which criteria are established. The relationship of field-measured or final BAF to the baseline BAF is shown in equation 1:

$$(Eq. 1) \quad \text{Baseline BAF} = \left[\frac{\text{Field or Final BAF}}{f_{fd}} \right] \left[\frac{1}{f_l} \right]$$

where f_l = fraction of tissue that is lipid and f_{fd} = fraction of substance that is freely dissolved.

Derivation of Baseline BAFs

U.S. EPA (1997) derived revised baseline BAFs for PCBs; these are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1	
Baseline BAFs for PCBs (U.S. EPA, 1997)	
Trophic Level	Baseline BAF (L/kg)
3	26,550,000
4	52,720,000

These values have been reviewed and are believed appropriate for both the Great Lakes and the rest of the State.

DERIVATION OF WATER QUALITY VALUE

As required by 6 NYCRR 702.8(a) the water quality value must equal the acceptable daily intake from fish consumption divided by a bioaccumulation factor and by a fish consumption rate of 0.033 kg/day.

A. Acceptable Daily Intake From Fish Consumption

As required by 6 NYCRR 702.8(b), the most stringent acceptable daily intake from fish consumption is the human dose for oncogenic effects, as determined from 6 NYCRR 702.4. This value is calculated from the cancer slope factor of $2 \text{ [mg/(kg} \cdot \text{day)]}^{-1}$, above, for a one-in-one million risk level as follows:

$$\frac{1 \times 10^{-6} \times 10^3 \text{ ug/mg}}{2 \text{ [(mg/(kg} \cdot \text{day)]}^{-1}] = 5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ ug/(kg} \cdot \text{day)}$$

B. Final BAF

As described above, a baseline BAF is adjusted by the fish lipid fraction and the fraction freely dissolved to yield a final BAF for the substance. Equation 1 (above) is rearranged to solve for final BAF:

$$\text{Final BAF} = [(\text{baseline BAF})(f_l) + 1](f_{fd})$$

where values for f_l and f_{fd} are appropriate to criteria for New York State. Because, as described below, humans are exposed to fish from two trophic levels, this calculation is performed to generate final BAFs for trophic levels 3 and 4.

A fish lipid content of 3% had previously been used when calculating BAFs for deriving criteria for New York State. U.S. EPA (1995a) apportions daily fish consumption between fish of trophic levels 3 and 4. Specifically, 24% is assigned to trophic level 3 fish, with a standardized lipid fraction of 0.0182 (1.82%), and 76% to trophic level 4 fish, with a standardized lipid fraction of 0.0310 (3.1%). The weighted average lipid fraction of trophic level 3 and 4 fish is thus 0.028 (2.8%), which is very close to the value of 3% that had been used in New York State. U.S. EPA's apportionment approach is believed to be protective of human consumers of fish statewide, and will be used in the derivation of the water quality value in this fact sheet to achieve consistency with requirements for the Great Lakes Basin.

For deriving f_{fd} values for the Great Lakes, U.S. EPA (1995a) procedures use DOC and POC values of 2 and 0.04 mg/L respectively. The POC level of 0.04 mg/L is on the low end for the Great Lakes but U.S. EPA selected it to ensure protection throughout the System.

Data on levels of DOC and POC were examined for fresh and marine waters in New York State. Levels of DOC vary somewhat through the State but are fairly close to 2 mg/L. The f_{fd} is not very sensitive to changes in concentration of DOC. Levels of POC in New York State range from zero to several mg/L, but a sufficient number of near-zero values were found such that the level that EPA uses for the Great Lakes Basin seems appropriate for statewide standards and at the same time provides consistency with the Federal requirements for the Great Lakes System.

Using these values for DOC and POC, f_{fd} is calculated using the equation:

$$f_{fd} = \frac{1}{1 + (0.00000024 \text{ kg/L})(K_{ow})}$$

With a composite K_{ow} of 2,107,000 (U.S. EPA, 1997), the fraction freely dissolved is calculated to be 0.6642.

As described above, the baseline BAFs for PCBs for trophic levels 3 and 4 are 26,550,000 and 52,720,000 L/kg respectively.

The final BAF for trophic level 3 is calculated as:

$$\text{Final BAF}_{\text{TL3}} = [(\text{baseline BAF}_{\text{TL3}})(f_{\text{I TL3}}) + 1](f_{\text{fd}}) =$$

$$\text{Final BAF}_{\text{TL3}} = [(26,550,000)(0.0182) + 1](0.6642) = 321,000 \text{ L/kg}$$

The final BAF for trophic level 4 is calculated as:

$$\text{Final BAF}_{\text{TL4}} = [(\text{baseline BAF}_{\text{TL4}})(f_{\text{I TL4}}) + 1](f_{\text{fd}}) =$$

$$\text{Final BAF}_{\text{TL4}} = [(52,720,000)(0.0310) + 1](0.6642) = 1,090,000 \text{ L/kg}$$

C. Human Exposure (Fish Consumption)

6 NYCRR 702.8 requires that H(FC) values be based on a fish consumption rate of 0.033 kg/day.

D. Calculation of Water Quality Value

The water quality value (WQV) is derived using a human body weight of 70 kg and a daily fish consumption rate of 0.033 kg as shown below. The fish consumption is apportioned as 24% trophic level 3 and 76% trophic level 4.

$$\text{WQV} = \frac{\text{Acceptable Daily Intake from Fish Consumption} \times 70 \text{ kg}}{[(\text{BAF}_{\text{TL3}})(0.24) + (\text{BAF}_{\text{TL4}})(0.76)] \times 0.033 \text{ kg/day}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{WQV} &= \frac{5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ ug PCBs}/(\text{kg} \cdot \text{day}) \times 70 \text{ kg}}{[(321,000 \text{ L/kg})(0.24) + (1,090,000 \text{ L/kg})(0.76)] \times 0.033 \text{ kg/day}} \\ &= 1.17 \times 10^{-6} \text{ ug/L, rounded to } 1 \times 10^{-6} \text{ ug/L} \end{aligned}$$

REFERENCES

6 NYCRR (New York State Codes, Rules and Regulations). Water Quality Regulations, Surface Water and Groundwater Classifications and Standards: Title 6 NYCRR, Chapter X, Parts 700-705. Albany, NY: Department of Environmental Conservation.

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the Great Lakes System. 60 Federal Register: 15366-15425. March 23, 1995.

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