



Overview

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) are a class of toxic contaminants that don't break down in the environment. PAHs are known to have harmful impacts on humans and the environment, and several PAHs are probable human carcinogens. Coal tar sealants contain high concentrations of PAHs. These sealants are used to maintain driveway, playground, and parking lot asphalt pavement that humans come in contact with daily. There are safer and cheaper alternatives available. As coal-tar sealants age, they are broken into small particles in the air and soil with high quantities of PAHs that can be ingested or tracked into homes.

Legislation

There have been 38 bills relating to PAH's introduced since 2015 and 12 bills in the past year.

Water Quality Testing for Contaminants including PAH

- Indiana [HB 1357](#) requires independent testing of Lake Michigan Water for the presence and concentration of pollutants including PAHs.

Prohibiting Sale or Use of Products Containing Coal Tar

- Wisconsin [AB 797](#), New York [S 6308](#), Michigan [HB 4719](#), and District of Columbia [B22 1014](#) prohibit the sale and use of coal tar-based sealant products and other high PAH sealant pavement products.

Study Committees

- South Carolina [HJR 5194](#) establishes a study committee to determine PAHs levels in soils and evaluate impact on health and quality of life.
- Indiana [HR 6](#) assigns different committees to study the banning of the sale and use of coal tar pavement products.

KEYPOINTS

- PAHs are known to negatively impact human health and the environment and do not break down naturally. ([Interlochen Public Radio](#), [EPA](#))
- Coal tar sealants used in driveways, playgrounds and parking lots have high concentrations of PAHs and lead to elevated PAH levels in air and water sources. ([USGS](#))
- Cancer risk for people living adjacent to coal tar sealed pavement was 38 times higher than those living adjacent to unsealed pavement. ([USGS](#))
- Alternative pavement options like pervious concrete or permeable asphalt do not require sealants. ([EPA](#))

Other Resources

- [CDC Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#): health effects from PAH exposure.
- [EPA's PAH, Coal Tar, and Stormwater Pollution Fact Sheet](#).
- The [Department of Energy and Environment outlines the DC](#) ban on coal tar sealants and highlights the background of the PAH issue.
- The [United States Geological Survey](#) Coal Tar and PAH overview.
- [Eurekalert](#) article outlines how PAHs can bind to particulate matter and exacerbate air pollution problems.
- [CDC Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry](#) information on health effects from PAH exposure.

