

What are the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)?

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are the organic chemicals that are/have:

- toxic effects on living organisms and the environment,
- accumulated in fatty tissue in organisms, persistent in the environment (because of the stable structure, resist to undergo any photolytic, chemical and biological reactions),
- semi-volatile characteristics, capable of long range transboundary atmospheric transport and posing a global environmental problem.

These substances can cause birth defects and injuries, cancers, disruption of immune systems and reproductive system problems.

How POPs have emerged and how these chemicals are managed?

Since the first half of the last century, Persistent Organic Pollutants have been developed in the industry and used in a wide range of chemical substances, and mixtures of them (e.g. pesticides, insecticides, dielectric and hydraulic fluids in industrial machinery, capacitors and transformers). Recently it has also been used as chemical additives in products such as flame retardants and water repellents especially in the construction materials, textile, automotive industry. Moreover, POPs are unintentionally generated in a wide range of processes involving combustion; i.e. waste incineration facilities, including cement kilns where the hazardous wastes have been burned, production of pulp using elemental chlorine or chemicals generating chlorine during bleaching, and thermal processes in the metallurgical industry, etc.

Also, there has been an increase in the production of chemicals with the development of industry and technology towards the end of 1800s. The adventure started with the production of DDT in 1874 has continued with the production of various industrial chemicals. However, in parallel with the industrial development in the 1960s, scientific developments also manifested themselves and scientists conducted and reported studies on the damage caused by these industrial chemicals and pesticides on the human health and environment. Thereafter, DDT was banned all over the world, and later PCBs were banned in the USA. Following the UNEP Decision on POPs from the 90s onwards with the signing of CLRTAP and Stockholm Convention, serious attempts have been made with the prohibition of the production and use of these chemicals, the reduction of unintentionally produced POPs and listing the new chemicals in the annexes of the convention as result of the scientific and technological developments. Turkey signed the Stockholm Convention on 23 May 2001 and became a party by 12 January 2010. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization published the "Regulation on Persistent Organic Pollutants" with No. 30595, on 14 November 2018.

Regulation on Control of Soil Pollution and Sites Contaminated by Point Sources

The identification, registration and monitoring of the contaminated, or possibly contaminated sites, identification of the sites to be cleaned and cleaning methods and criteria have been defined within the "Regulation on Control of Soil Pollution and Sites Contaminated by Point Sources" (Regulation) published in the Official Gazette No. 27605 and dated 08.06.2010.

The Regulation has been implemented through "Contaminated Sites Information System (CSIS)". The CSIS has been developed to store, update and maintain the inventory data about the point-sources contaminated and possibly contaminated sites and, when necessary, enable quick access to this information. The information system is accessed through <https://ecbs.cevre.gov.tr>

Who Should Notify?

The sectors on the "List of Potentially Soil Polluting Activities and Activity-Specific Pollution Indicator Parameters" given in Annex-2 of the Regulation should fill the "Activity Briefing Form" in Annex-3, and make a notification through the CSIS.

When to Renew the Notification?

In case of a change in the data and information in the "Activity Briefing Form" given in Annex-3, the activity owners are required to log-into the system within 30 days and update their data and information accordingly.

Remediation of the Contaminated Sites

The contaminated or possibly contaminated sites are identified and assessed through CSIS. After the assessment, the Ministry carry out activities for the sites needs to be remediated.



