

# Campaign for Responsible Technology

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## OVER 20 MILLION POUNDS OF GLYCOL ETHERS RELEASED BY ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY IN LAST FOUR YEARS

### CHEMICAL RECENTLY LINKED TO MISCARRIAGES AT IBM

In response to a recent report that IBM women chip workers had highly elevated rates of miscarriages, the Campaign for Responsible Technology (CRT) surveyed the volume of glycol ethers used in the electronics industry and the number of workers at risk.

#### I. Chemical Release Data for Glycol Ethers

Toxic Release Inventory data provided to the EPA (mandated by the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act passed in 1986) shows that over a four year period, the electronics and semiconductor industries released huge quantities of glycol ethers to the atmosphere, publicly-operated water treatment systems, or hazardous waste treatment facilities. These release volumes are indicative of how and where the toxic chemicals are used.

Glycol ethers are known to cause miscarriages, birth defects, testicular atrophy, and other illnesses.

CRT found that the electronics industry uses large quantities of glycol ethers<sup>1</sup>:

|       |    |   |
|-------|----|---|
| 1987  | -- | 4,721,563 pounds released                   |
| 1988  | -- | 5,899,064 pounds released                   |
| 1989  | -- | 5,894,597 pounds released                   |
| 1990  | -- | 4,530,170 pounds released                   |
| TOTAL | -- | 21,045,394 pounds of glycol ethers released |

In the semiconductor industry (SIC 3674) where IBM did its study of miscarriages, CRT found:

|       |    |  |
|-------|----|--|
| 1987  | -- | 586,357 pounds released                    |
| 1988  | -- | 854,176 pounds released                    |
| 1989  | -- | 675,510 pounds released                    |
| 1990  | -- | 751,174 pounds released                    |
| TOTAL | -- | 2,867,217 pounds of glycol ethers released |

<sup>1</sup> TRI search was done for the two-digit standard industrial classification code 36, covering communications equipment and electronic components & accessories.