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PATCH FOR POTHoles IS 'POISON'

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EXCLUSIVE

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A material used to patch potholes leaks 240,000 gallons of environmentally toxic fuel oil every year onto New York City's streets, industry sources told The Post.

The diesel or other toxic oil - key ingredients in the blacktop material known as "cold patch" - separates as the material hardens, and then leaches into the soil, is washed off into sewers or rivers, or evaporates into the air, according to paving-industry publications.

"You're talking about an extraordinary amount of diesel fuel," said Ralph Avallone, president of the International Green Energy Council environmental-education group.

"It's not healthy for our children. It's not healthy for our animals. It's not healthy for our planet."

Although cold patch has long been used to fill potholes, there have been no studies on the health impact of its extensive fuel runoff.

The city Department of Transportation, a major cold-patch consumer, recently awarded a low-bid contract to buy up to 5,000 tons over the next two years of a new type of cold patch that doesn't contain diesel fuel. Instead, it contains an environmentally friendly biodegradable solvent.

But the DOT had no clue that GreenPatch, made by Cold Mix Manufacturing in Flushing, Queens, contained an eco-friendlier fuel oil until a Post reporter told the agency.

GreenPatch is "definitely along the lines of what we're looking for," said DOT spokesman Seth Solomnow, noting his agency's push toward environmentally beneficial practices.

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