# RADON: HEALTH EFFECTS, SAFETY & PROTECTION

**PRESENTED TO:**
MFL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CENTRE
DECEMBER 19, 2023

**PRESENTED BY:**
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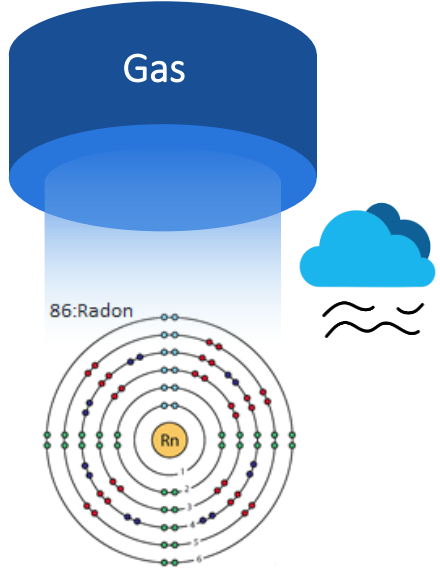
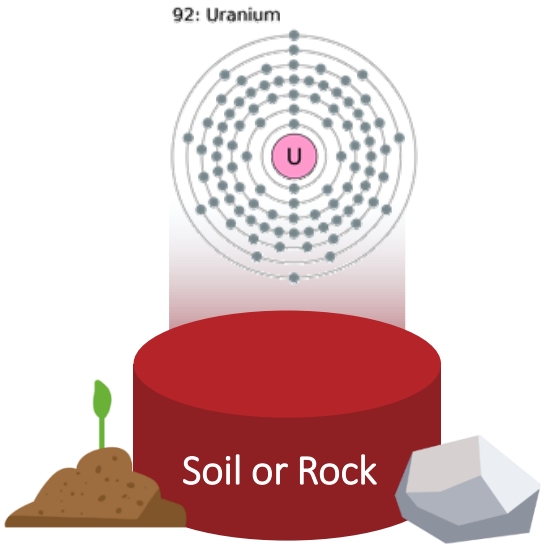
ADAM ANDERSON, MANITOBA LUNG ASSOCIATION

# WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a **radioactive gas** that is produced naturally by the breakdown of uranium in the ground




Radon




Uranium

**Radon is:**

- Colourless
- Odourless
- Tasteless

# NATURAL RADIATION IS EVERYWHERE

Radon represents almost

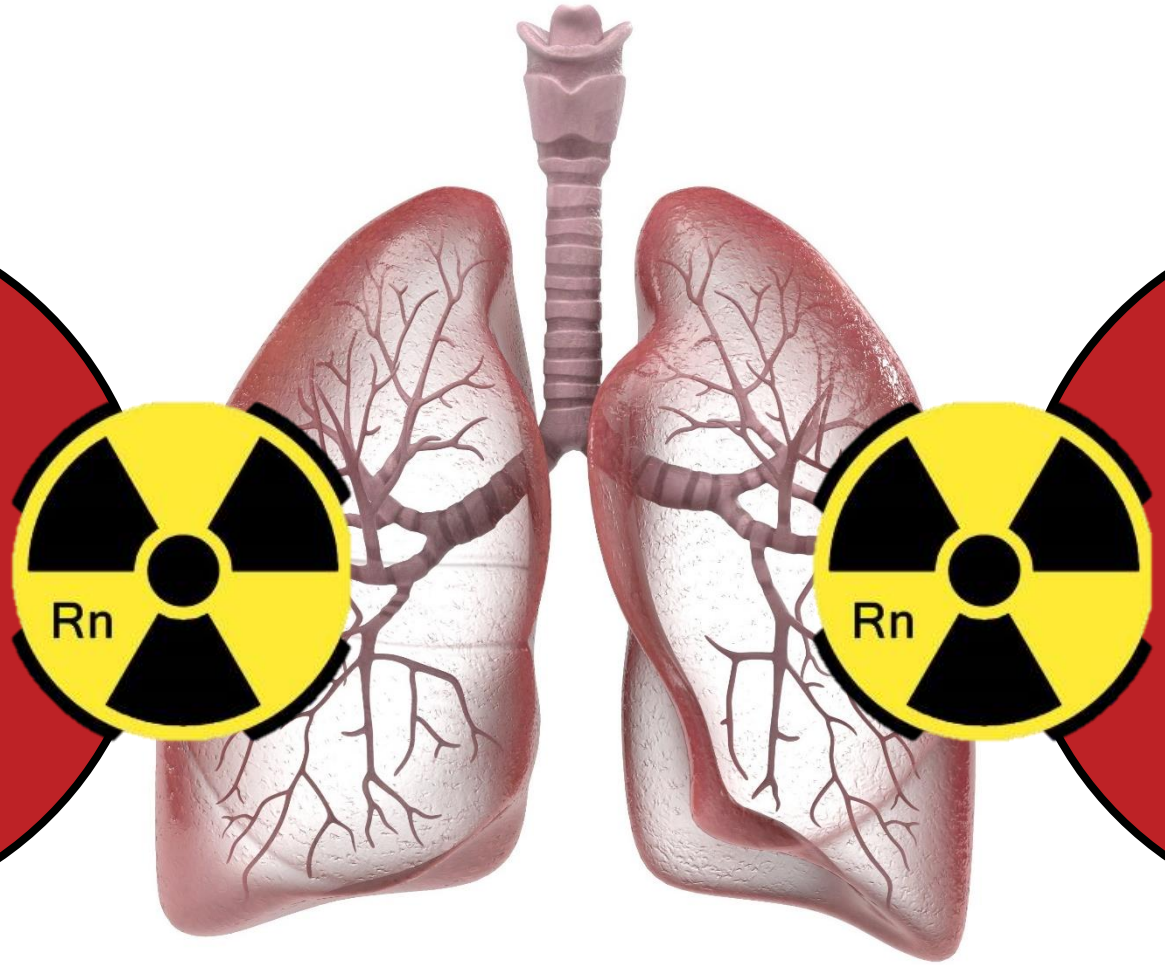
**50% of a person's lifetime radiation exposure**

# HOW RADON ENTERS

- Any cracks, opening or gaps in foundation walls or floors provide route(s) of entry into home
- The air pressure inside a house is normally lower than the pressure underneath or around the foundation
  - *Windows, wood stoves, fireplaces, ventilation units, can all affect the pressure differential*
- This difference in pressure acts like a vacuum drawing radon in through foundation cracks and other openings
- Once inside the home, radon can build up to dangerous levels

# HEALTH RISK

Radon is the **#1 CAUSE OF LUNG CANCER** in people who do not smoke

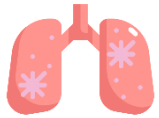



Kills more than **3,000** Canadians each year

**Radon is a known carcinogen** (Group 1)

# RISK COMPARISON

## Annual Deaths in Canada:

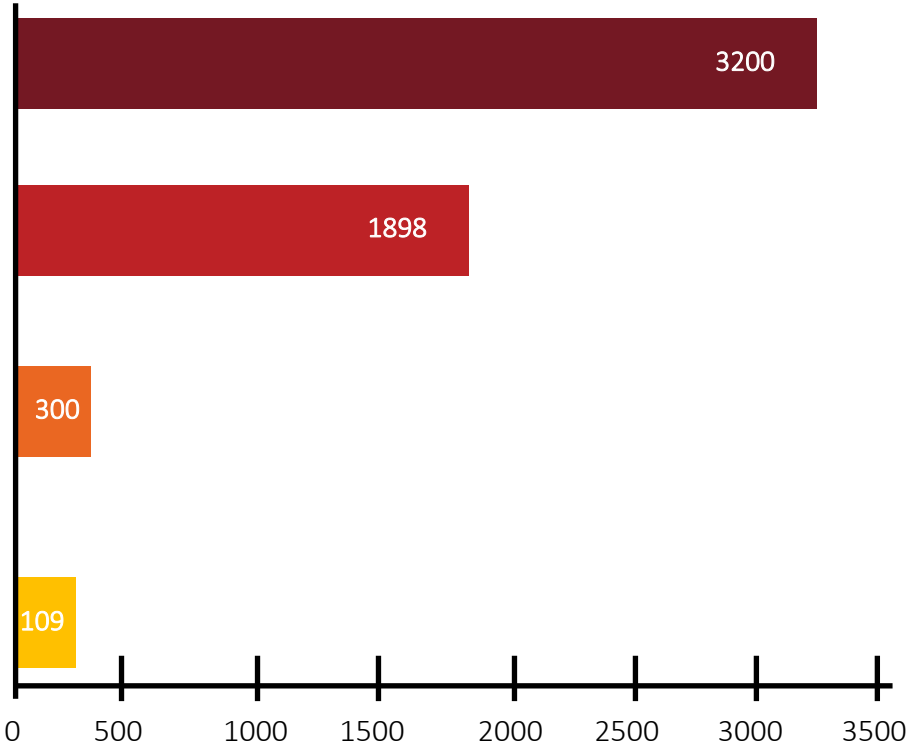


# of deaths from radon-induced lung cancer

# of deaths from car accidents

# of deaths from carbon monoxide

# of deaths from house fire





The risk of lung cancer from radon is significant but preventable.

References:
www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/road/publications/canadian-motor-vehicle-traffic-collision-statistics-2016.html
www.injuryresearch.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Carbon-Monoxide-Oct-2017-Final-UFV.pdf
www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510019501

# FEDERAL GUIDELINES

**Radon Guideline in Canada**

**200 Bq/m³**

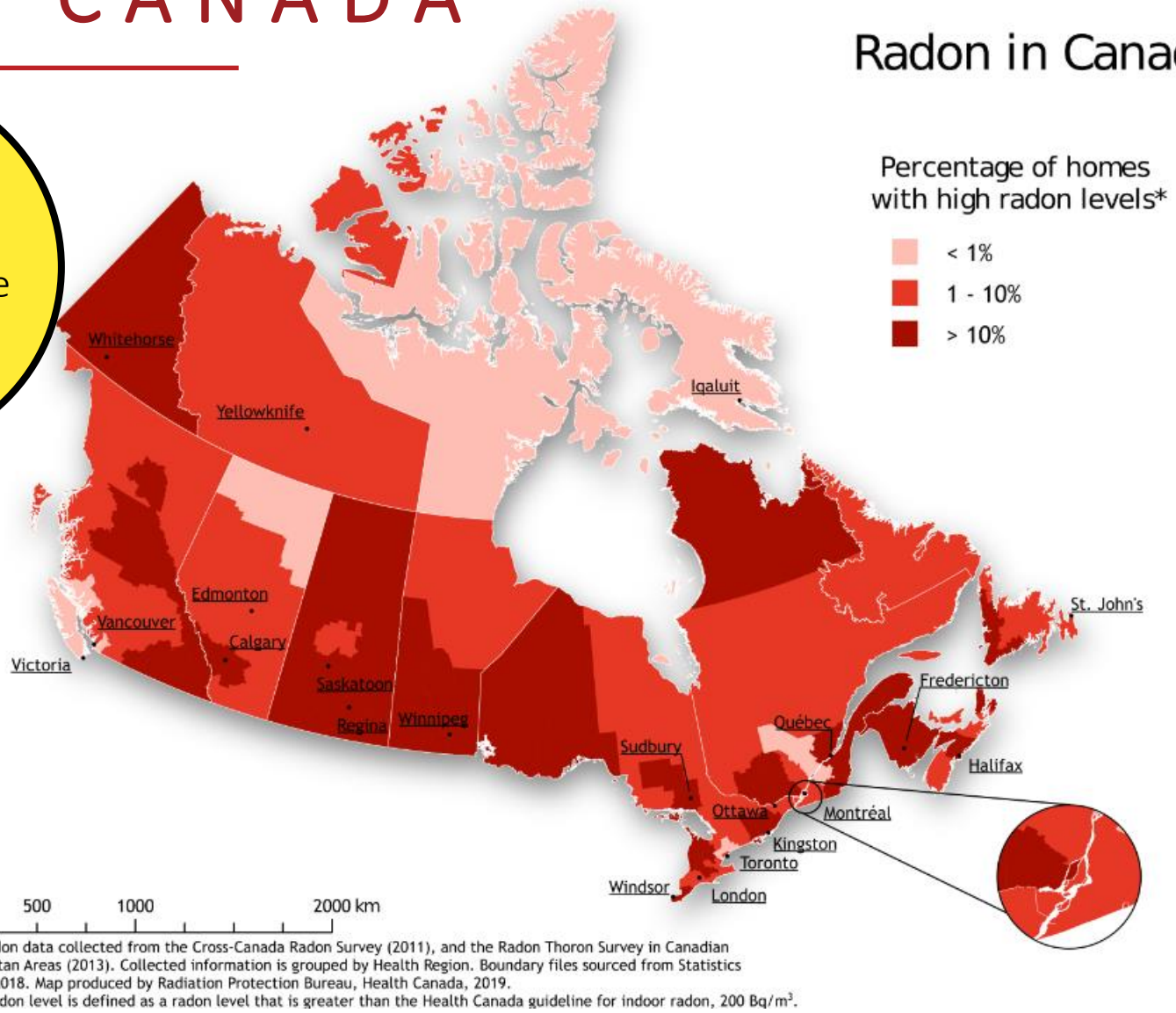
Places where we spend **more than 4 hours** per day

- Remedial measures should be undertaken in a dwelling whenever the average annual radon concentration exceeds 200 Bq/m³
- The higher the radon concentration, the sooner remedial measures should be undertaken
- The corrective action should reduce the radon concentration as much as reasonably practicable

# RADON IN CANADA

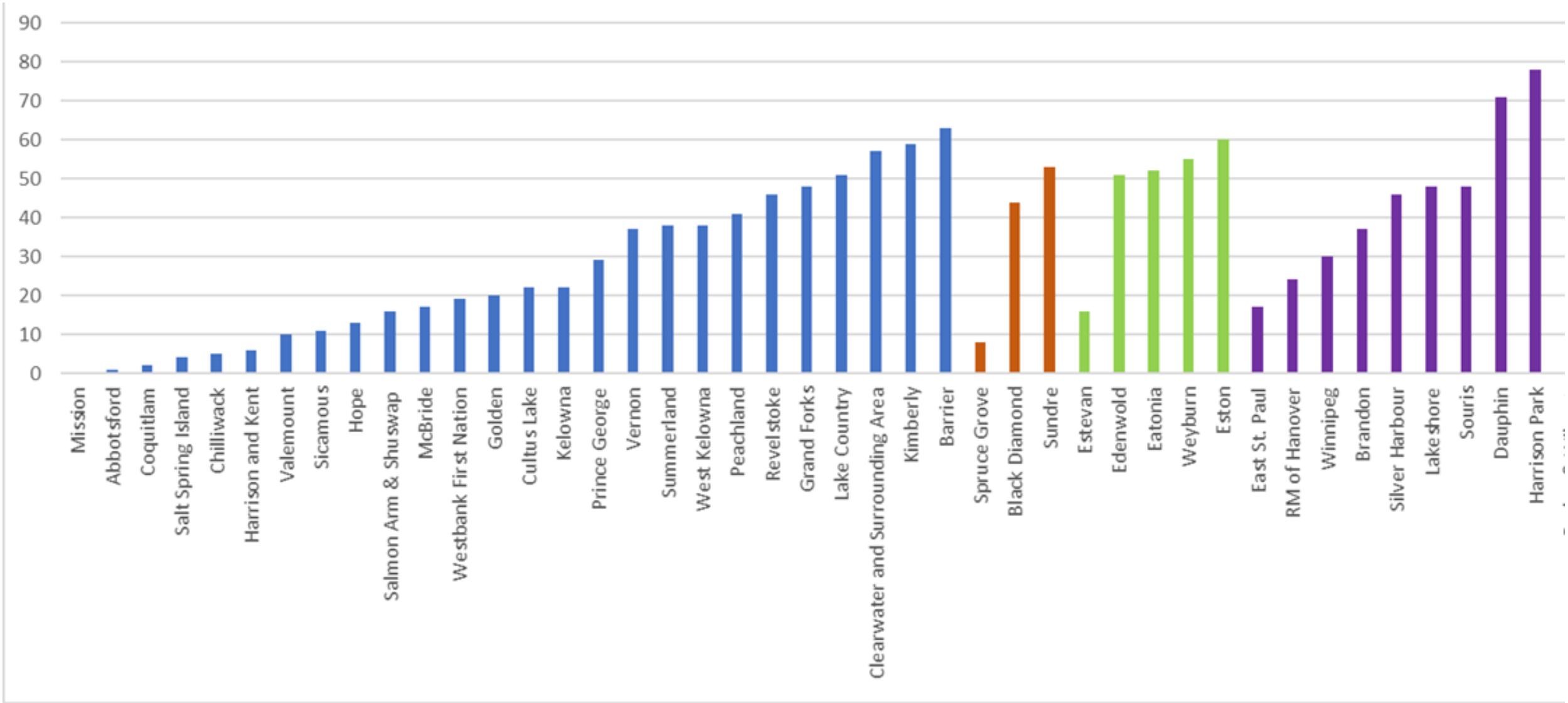
There are no areas of the country that are **'radon free'**

Two houses **built side-by-side** can have different indoor radon levels



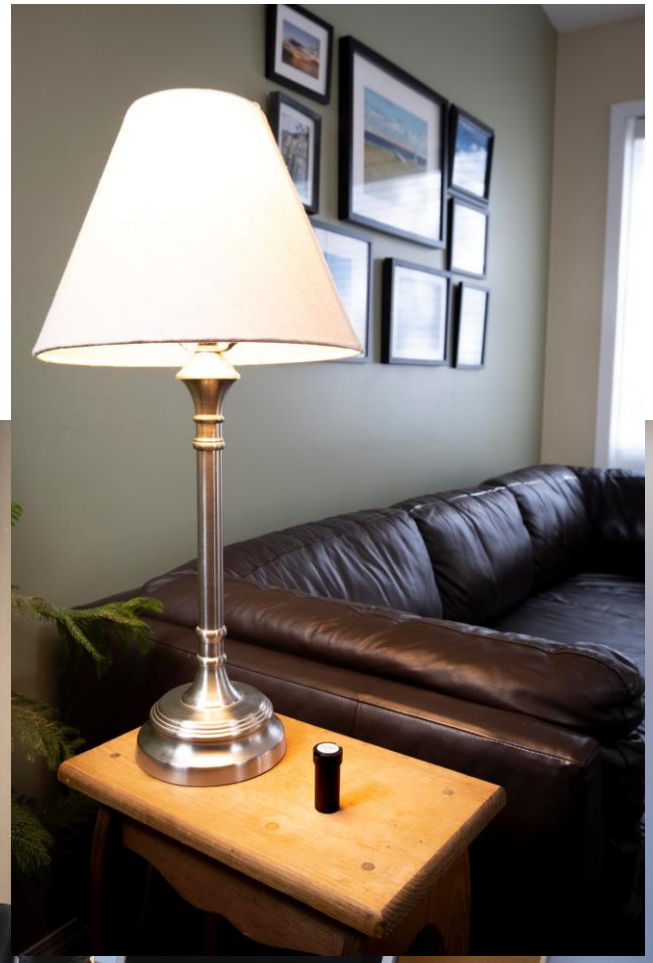

Radon is found **in every building in Canada**

# PREVALENCE BY COMMUNITY



# TESTING YOUR HOME FOR RADON IS EASY!

- Place it in the lowest lived in level (such as a home office, bedroom or play-room.
- Choose a location which is away from a window and up off the floor.
- Leave it in place for 91 days or more before mailing it back to the lab.



# TESTING OPTIONS

## **Option 1:** Purchase a Do It Yourself kit

Buildings should be tested using long-term test devices for a minimum of 3 months in fall and/or winter

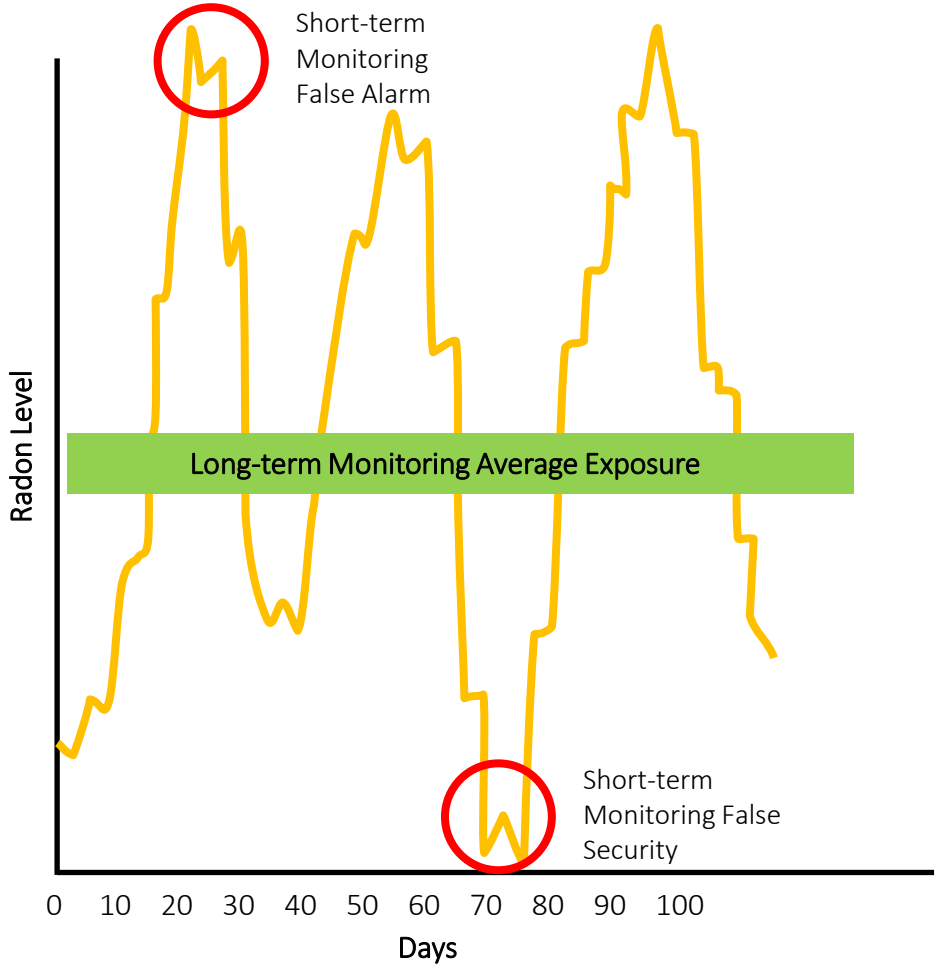
OR

## **Option 2:** Hire a certified radon measurement professional

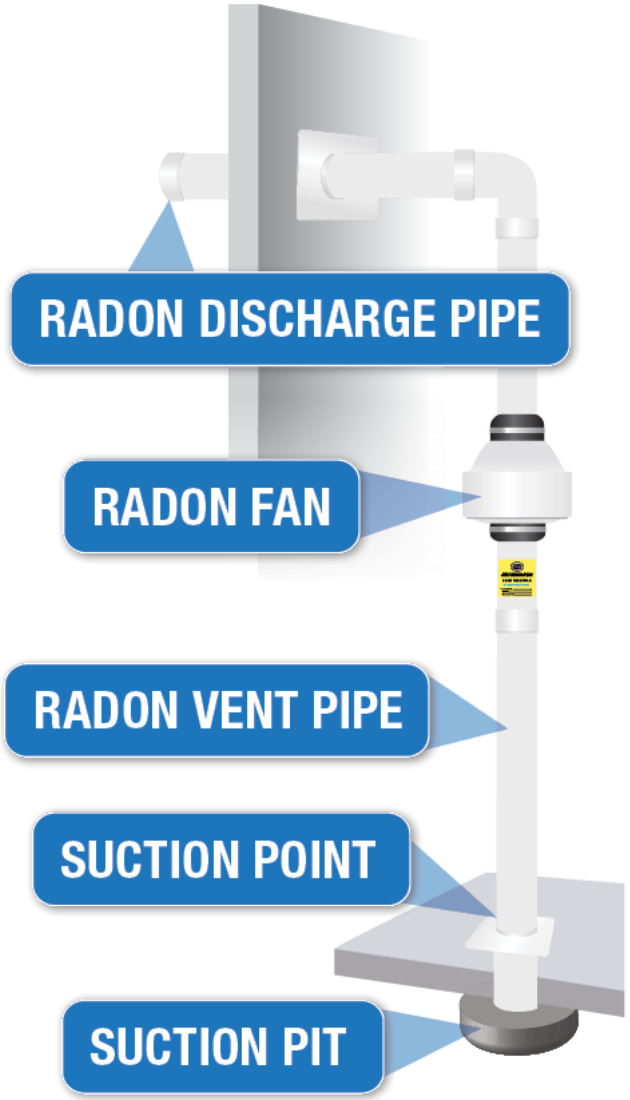

To find a radon test kit or certified measurement professional go to:
www.TakeActiononRadon.ca/test

# WHY LONG-TERM TESTING?

- Indoor **radon levels vary greatly** even over a 24 hour period
- **Measurements gathered over a longer period of time** will provide a better estimate of the annual average exposure
- Several factors including building design, building condition, occupancy pattern etc. **influence radon levels** in a house



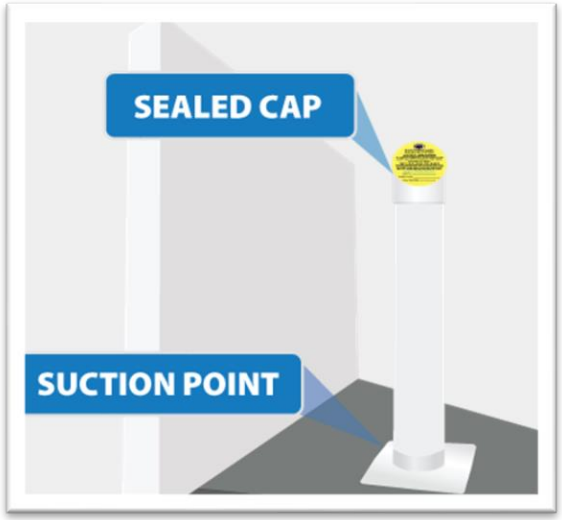
# ACTIVE SOIL DEPRESSURISATION (ASD) SYSTEM




- Most effective, reliable and common technique
- A pipe is installed through the foundation and directed outside
- A fan is attached to the pipe that is continuously run to draw radon from beneath the home and vented outdoors, where it gets diluted
- ASD reverses the air pressure difference between the house and soil, reducing the amount of radon that is drawn into the home through the foundation
- A C-NRPP certified professional can install an effective ASD system in 1 day.

# NATIONAL BUILDING CODE INCLUDES RADON CONTROL MEASURES:

- Granular fill under the slab
- Well-sealed membrane air barrier
- Sump pit is sealed airtight
- Radon rough-in pipe for future installation




**The radon rough-in pipe is not a completed mitigation system!**

BREATHE

the lung association

# Lungs Matter

## Home Radon Mitigation Grant Program

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the lung association

**In Partnership with**

CARST ACSTR Rn

TAKE ACTION ON RADON

# Our Goals

Lungs Matter is the only national program available for eligible Canadians seeking financial assistance with radon mitigations.

The grant program available by the Lung Association seeks to improve the health quality and outcomes of Canadians by increasing access to radon mitigations for low-income families, who might not otherwise be able to afford mitigations and would therefore continue to live at greater risk of lung cancer.

We also seek to provide mitigation assistance for those already diagnosed with Lung Cancer so they are not also burdened by worry for their family while dealing with their diagnosis.

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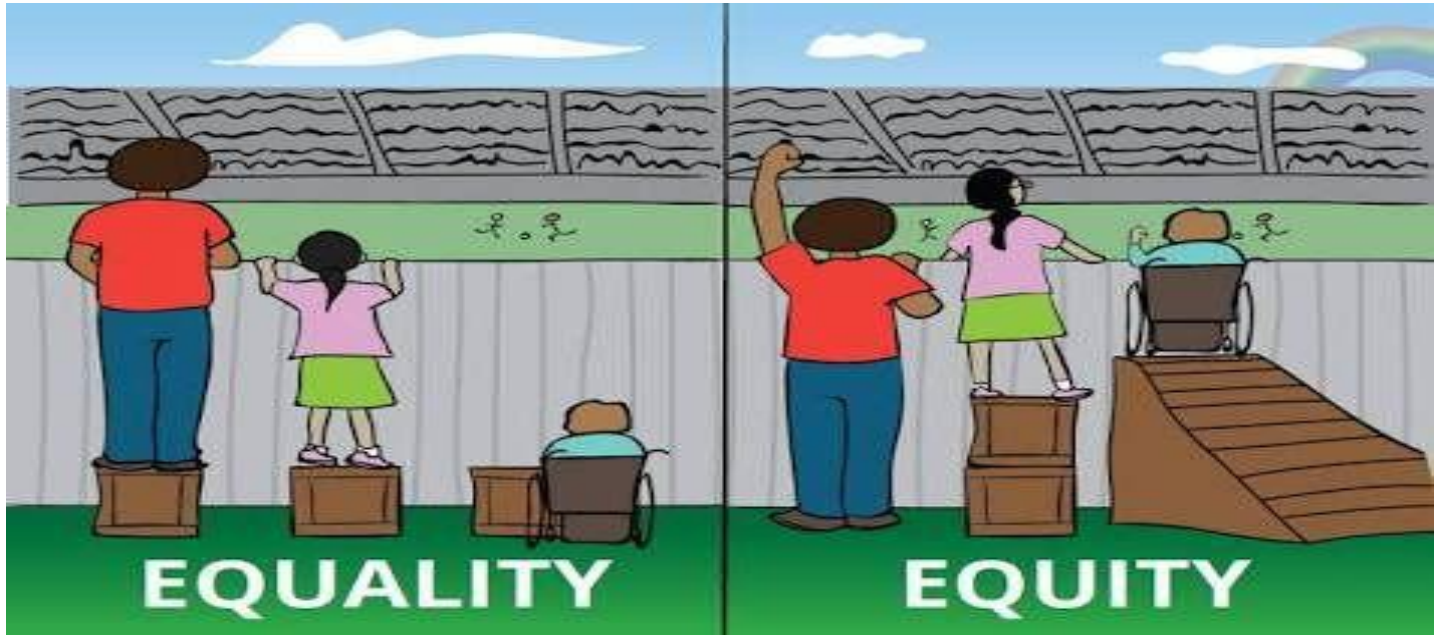
# Health Equity

Health equity is created when individuals have a fair opportunity to reach their fullest health potential. Achieving health equity requires reducing unnecessary and avoidable differences that are unfair and unjust. Many causes of health inequities related to social and environmental factors including: income, social status, race, gender, education, and physical environment. [1]

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# Programs across Canada addressing affordability for radon mitigations

**Manitoba Hydro Energy Finance Plan**
Qualifying Upgrade: Radon mitigation (through C-NRPP certified contractor)
https://www.hydro.mb.ca/your_home/loans_financing/energy_finance_plan/

**Lung Sask Caring Breathes Radon Reduction program**
A maximum of $500 reimbursement can be provided to an individual per calendar year.

**Tarion Home Warranty in Ontario**
Covers the cost of radon mitigation in new homes in Ontario that are 7 years old or less.

**Ontario Renovates**
The Ontario Renovates Program provides homeowners with forgivable loan assistance to low- and moderate-income households to assist them in performing eligible major repairs, renovations and accessibility modifications to their homes.

**Various Quebec Municipalities**
Vaudreille-Dorion and Victoriaville Habitation Durable. Provide $500 grant for residents in their environmental grant programs

# LUNGS MATTER Eligibility

1. Over 200 ($Bq/m^3$) on a C-NRPP-approved 90-day test kit
2. Has been diagnosed with Lung Cancer or
3. Has an income below the **Median** income of their home province.
4. Has a quote to have the work done by a C-NRPP certified professional.

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# Program Delivery

The Lung Association has set up a simple online application form

www.lung.ca/lungs-matter-radon-mitigation-support

Grant applications then go through an approval committee made up of representatives from CARST and other health organizations with knowledge of radon.

Grant applications are assessed through a grading scale that determines the priority of mitigation cases based on; eligibility criteria and other application form criteria.

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# Testimonials

In early 2021, Thanks to breast screening I found out I had a small tumor in my right breast that was grade 1 breast cancer and so I had a lumpectomy in July.

I planned to have 5 days of radiation but the CT planning scan showed a tumor in my right lung. It was a massive shock and a very scary time for me and my family. Following a biopsy, PET, CT, and MRI scans, I was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer as lesions were also found in my vertebrae. We asked, “why and how did I get lung cancer?”

I learned that radon gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer so we tested our home where we have lived for 18 years, and found out that the radon levels were almost double the “safe” level of radon; we suspect this might be the cause of my lung cancer, and perhaps what caused the lung cancer of our family’s dog 5 years ago.

We are incredibly grateful for the financial support from the lung association to help us pay for the cost of radon mitigation. I encourage everyone to test for radon levels in their home.

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# Testimonials

I decided to have my home tested for radon the winter of 2022. I had recently moved my two boys to the downstairs bedrooms and was curious about my radon levels.

Results came back to be over  1090 Bq/$m^3$ very high.

I am a single mother and the cost to get the mitigation was just over $3000.  To find out I was eligible for the maximum grant of $1500 made it easier to complete the process - without it- I would have done it (the safety of my family is a priority) however it would have impacted our household in other ways.

My whole experience with Radon has been scary ( to find out our levels were so high) but rewarding knowing a specialist came in and made our home healthy again, and we are grateful to have some of the expenses covered.  I urge everyone to get the test done ….. you just never know.

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# Testimonials

Just wanted to say I am thankful for the grant and it would have been very tough financially to get a mitigation system due to the inflation. I have 4 kids and 2 of which have rooms in the basement. I've been pushing it off for almost 2 years and finally decided to try to do it because of the grant

To say that the lungs matter radon mitigation grant initiative, has been a huge positive development for our community, although true, would be a massive understatement. The importance of this program can only be described as tectonic, as it has drastically transformed the landscape for home owners who previously would be unable to afford radon mitigation. With the mb lung associations help, access to clean , healthy air to breathe is within reach for more Manitobans than ever before. I am so proud to be a contributing partner in this worthy program."

Eric Feuer
Canadian Shield Radon Testing & Mitigation

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# Thank you for attending
# &
# Thank you to our Lungs Matter Partners


**For more information contact:**
**adam.anderson@mb.lung.ca**
**Or info@mb.lung.ca**


Radon and your workplace:
PROTECTING YOUR EMPLOYEES
If YOU and YOUR employees WORK in an INDOOR environment, you should TEST your workplace FOR RADON.
Take the FIRST Step:
Find a professional to help you test your workplace at: CNRPP.CA
CANADIAN NATIONAL RADON PROFICIENCY PROGRAM
C-NRPP
PNCR-C
PROGRAMME NATIONAL DE COMPÉTENCE SUR LE RADON AU CANADA

# Canada has a national certification program – list on www.c-nrpp.ca

**To locate a radon professional in your area, please select a search method below and provide the necessary search terms.**

○ Search by postal code: Postal Code  Distance 50 KM

◉ Search by province: Province Ontario

Search for Measurement Professionals  Search

Found **91** Radon Measurement Professionals.

| SERVICE LOCATION | PROVIDERS NAME and COMPANY (** click on name for more info) | PHONE # |
|---|---|---|

Find a Professional

## Canadian National Radon Proficiency Program

## Radon Presence

- Radon is ubiquitous in the built environment.
- Concentrations vary between buildings.

## Health & Safety

- Radon is a cancer causing workplace hazard requiring assessment and control.
- Health agencies agree (Health Canada, WHO, US EPA)

## Testing

- "The only way to know if your workplace has levels of radon higher than the guidelines is to conduct testing in each workplace".[1, 2]

## Risk Management

- Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.[3]
- Lung cancer risks from radon are greater than those of asbestos.

## Spatial Data

- Radon maps and studies can't be used as a means to rule out testing of certain buildings.

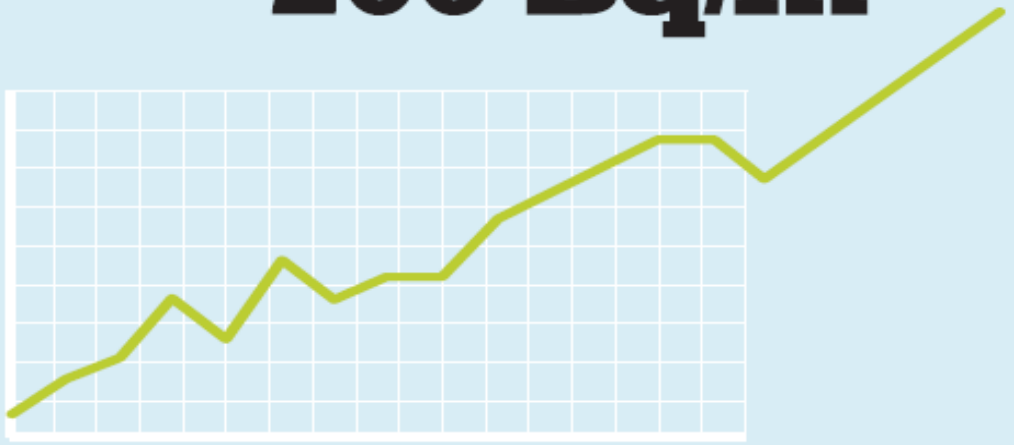

1. CCOHS (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety) https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/phys_agents/radon.html
2. p50 Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) and CAREX Canada, Environmental Scan of Radon Law and Policy: Best Practices in Canada and the European Union. August, 2018
3. "Radon and Cancer" Canadian Cancer Society, www.cancer.ca, www.cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/reduce-cancer-risk/make-informed-decisions/know-your-environment/radon-and-cancer/?region=on.

# Protect Your Workplace from Radon

Radon is a gas that you can't **see**, **smell**, or **taste** — but it can be dangerous. It's the second leading cause of lung cancer in Canada.

Radon is in the ground naturally, and sometimes gets into workplaces through contact with the ground.

**4%** of Federal Buildings tested were **above 200 Bq/m$^3$**



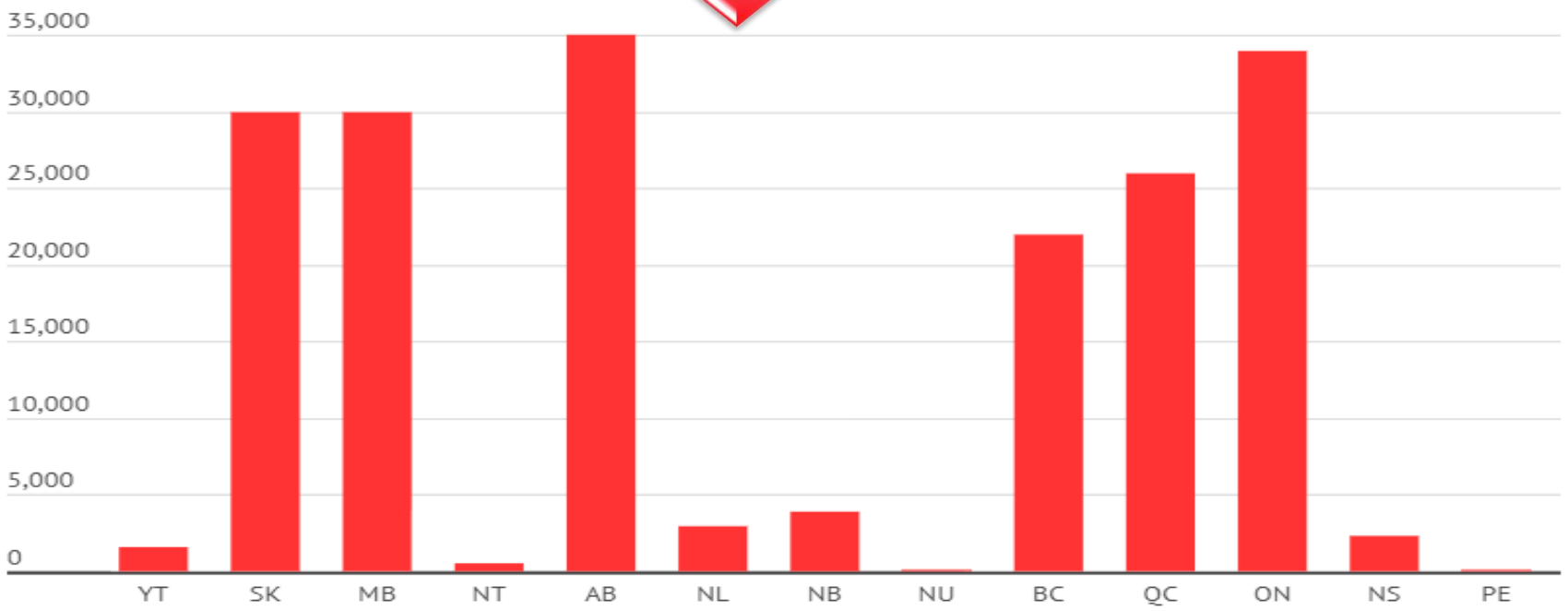
**CAREX** estimates **188,000** Canadians are exposed to elevated radon levels at their workplace.

www.carexcanada.ca/en/radon/occupational_estimate/

Health & Safety

**16% of lung cancer deaths** are related to radon.

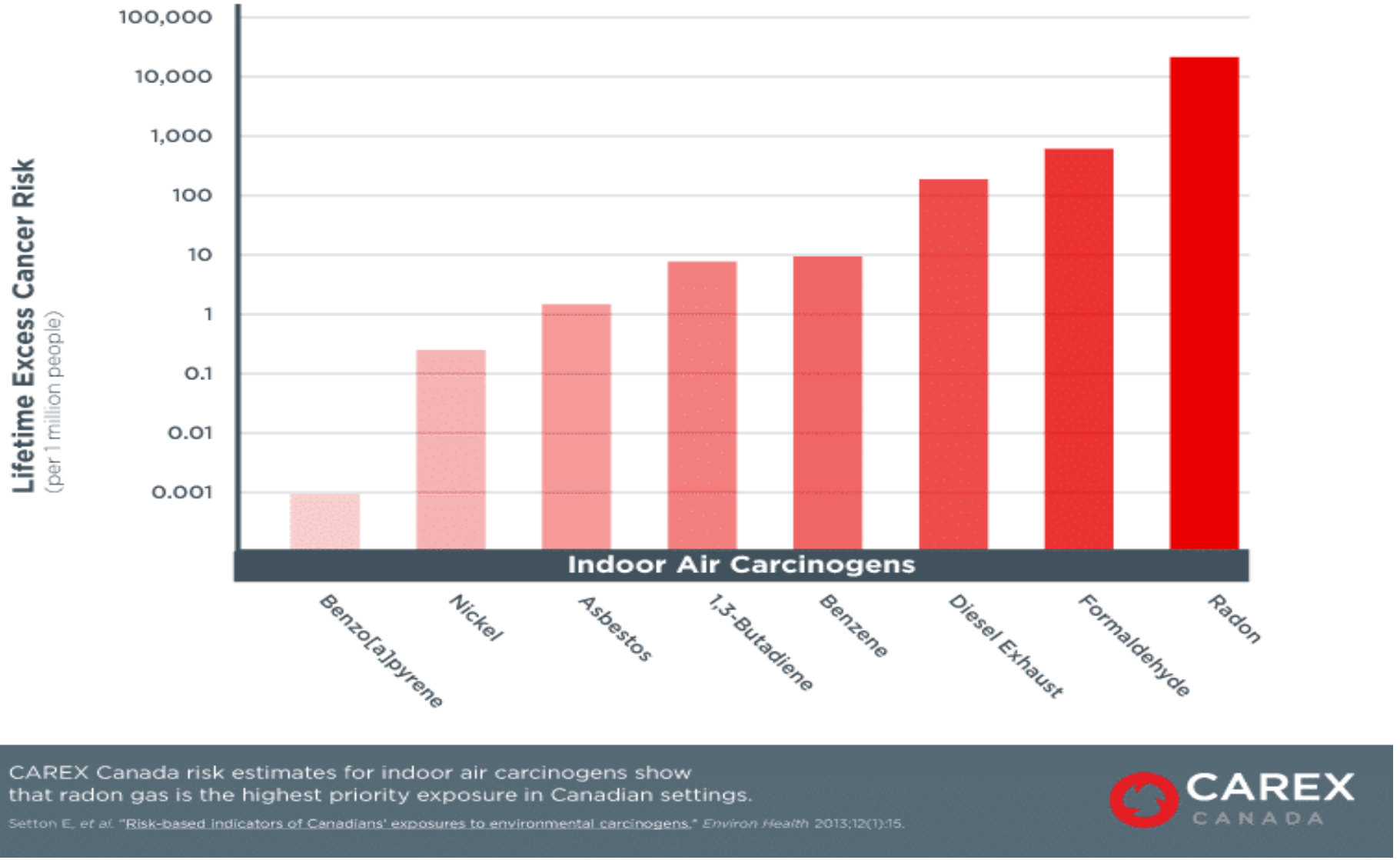
**188,000** Canadians are occupationally exposed to radon.




CAREX [CAREX Canada https://www.carexcanada.ca/special-topics/radon-in-buildings/](https://www.carexcanada.ca/special-topics/radon-in-buildings/)

Lifetime excess cancer risk estimates for indoor air carcinogens show that radon gas is the highest priority exposure in Canadian settings.[18]

**Radon cancer risk exceeds asbestos cancer risk in Canada.**




18 & Graph. CAREX Canada https://www.carexcanada.ca/special-topics/radon-in-buildings/

Testing

"There are no areas of the country that are 'radon free'".[19]

Testing

"The results of the study show that even for those provinces where the overall results indicate a lower incidence of homes (buildings) with elevated radon levels, there were still areas of those provinces with high radon levels and a significant number of homes (buildings) with radon concentrations above the guideline." [20]

Testing

"The survey's results should not be used as a tool to determine radon risk potential or whether or not to test a home (building) for radon". [21]

Testing

"The only way to know for sure if your home or workplace has levels of radon higher than the guidelines is to conduct testing in each home or workplace of concern regardless of location". [22]

19 -22. CCOHS (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety) https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/phys_agents/radon.html & Health Canada, Cross-Canada Survey of Radon Concentrations in Homes – Final Report, March 2012, p ii & iii ISBN: 978-1-100-20115-3

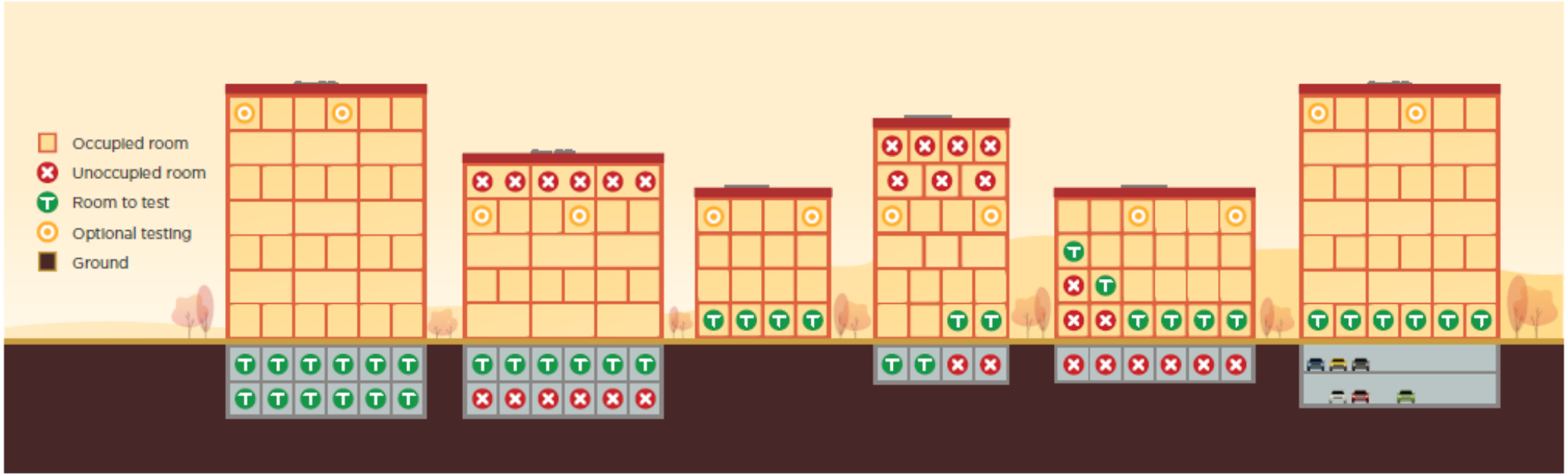
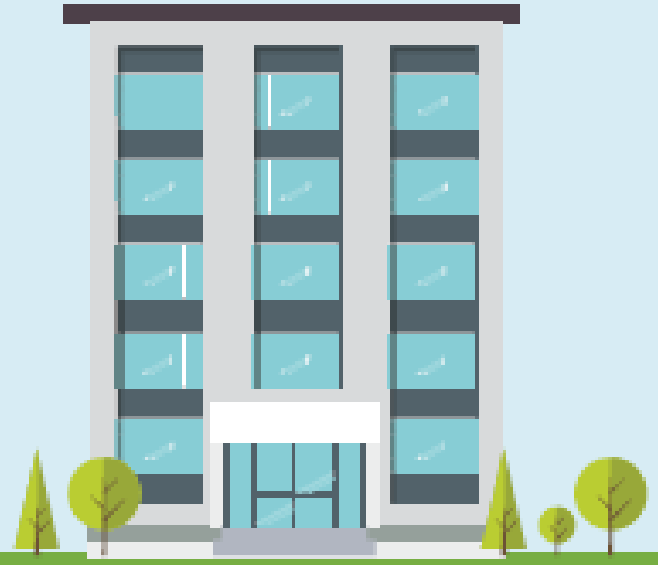



**Figure 5.** Recommended radon measurement locations in multi-storey buildings.

**Radon is in the ground naturally, but it can get into buildings through contact with the ground.**



# Testing your WORKPLACE for radon takes some planning!

- Test all the occupied rooms in the lowest level of the building until the full footprint of the building is tested.

- Choose a location within each room which is away from a window and up off the floor.

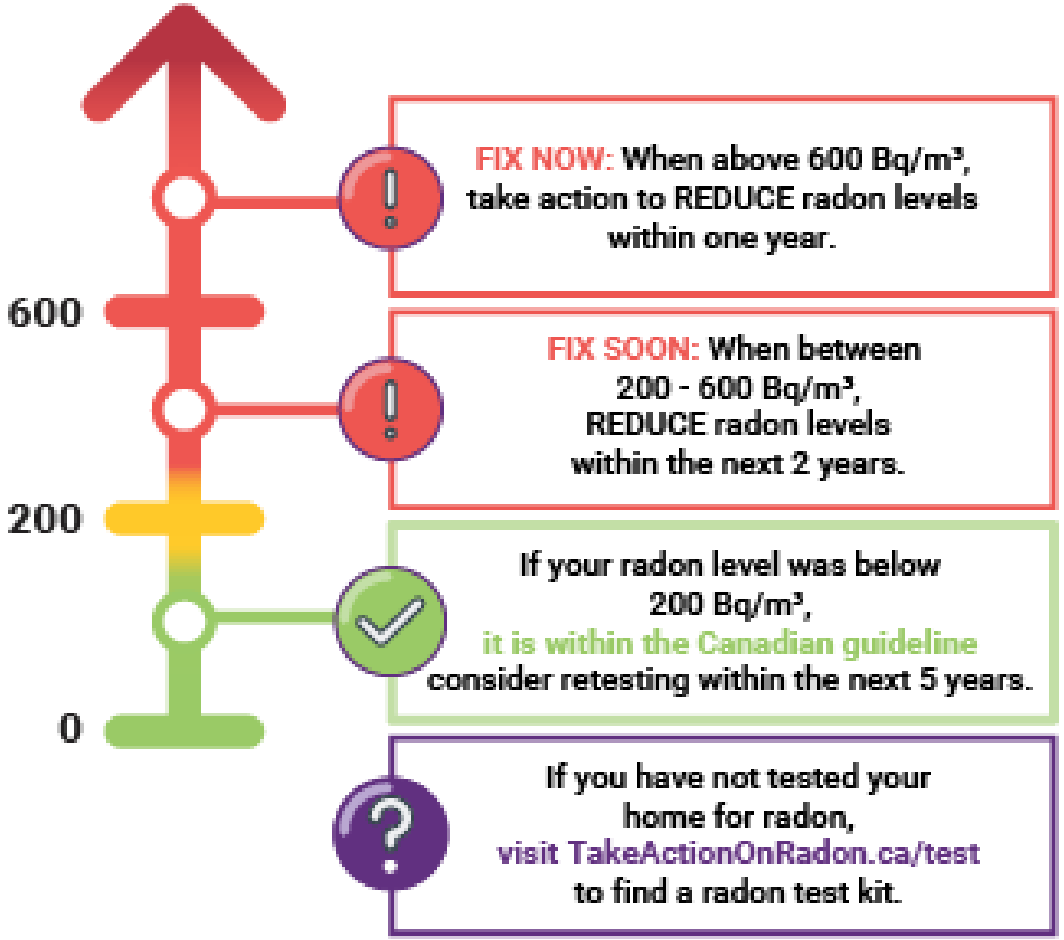
- Properly track the serial numbers, locations and start and end dates.

- Leave it in place for 91 days or more before mailing it back to the lab.

**Figure 4.** Potential testing locations in an office. Locations that are ***appropriate*** (✓) for radon testing and locations that are ***not appropriate*** (✗) for radon testing are indicated.

**NEXT STEPS after 91 day test reports received:**

- Follow up testing to ensure all occupied, ground-contact rooms are included
- Any rooms which are above 200 Bq/m$^3$ should be re-tested for 7-10 days with a Continuous Radon Monitor(CRM) to determine if the high levels are during occupied time
- Reduce radon within Health Canada's recommended time frames



# Worker Dose Management Options

# Pros and Cons of Mitigation Methods

| Principle | Pros | Cons |
|---|---|---|
| **Eliminate openings** | • Typically low to moderate cost<br>• Sealing large openings can reduce radon<br>• No energy or maintenance costs | • Extremely tedious work<br>• All openings may not be accessible<br>• Virtually never fully effective |
| **Active depressurization** | • Extremely effective<br>• Typically provides large reductions in radon<br>• Controls radon at the source<br>• Energy consumption low to moderate<br>• Typically moderate installation cost | • Requires power to operate<br>• Building loses some conditioned air<br>• Can be difficult in commercial buildings<br>• Requires piping installation to the outdoors |
| **Increased ventilation** | • Typically simple adaptation of existing HVAC<br>• Dynamic HVAC pilot systems (Radostat®) are available<br>• Typically a moderate installation cost<br>• Minimal disturbance to building interior | • Significant implication to energy use<br>• Impractical for radiant heated buildings<br>• Can reduce lifespan of HVAC system<br>• Radostat™ activates at 150 Bq/$m^3$ which may be insufficient for 100 Bq/$m^3$ action levels chosen by clients.<br>• Controls radon at the worker and not the source.<br>• Can be very expensive in some buildings. |

## Constant Dilution Ventilation

Increase ventilation rate and provide constant positive indoor pressure and dilution ventilation to reduce radon ingress and dilute indoor radon levels

## Dynamic Dilution Ventilation

Combines continuous real-time indoor radon monitoring coupled with dynamic ventilation controls on existing HVAC systems. System calls for added ventilation when radon concentrations reach a peak set-point.

Radon exposure in Canadian workplaces is governed by federal or provincial/territorial legislation.

- Federal workplaces are governed by:
  - Canada Occupational Health and Safety Act made under the Canada Labour Code (CLC).

- Provincial/Territorial workplaces are governed by:
  - Provincial/Territorial Occupational Health and Safety Acts.

- Radon is recognized by several cognizant agencies as a carcinogenic workplace hazard that requires assessment and control to ensure the health and safety of workers and building occupants.
- The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) classifies radiation as a physical agent and identifies radon in buildings as radiation. Furthermore radon and its decay products are classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as Group 1, carcinogenic to humans.[29]

29. CCOHS https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/phys_agents/radon.html
- https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/e589e36a-a1e8-440e-a059-e1244d34c56a/resource/c6e3f93f-f38e-453a-aca6-36fa73cb72bc/download/ohs-bulletin-rad007.pdf
- http://www.worksafesask.ca/prevention/environmental-risks/radon-gas/
- https://ohsguide.worksafenb.ca/topic/radon.html
- https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/gl_radon.php
-https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/hazards-exposures/radon

## Duty Under Provincial/Territorial Legislation to Assess and Control Radon in Workplaces

- All provinces have general duty clauses, that require employers to minimize hazards.[35] These clauses are broad enough to include radon, and in no case is radon specifically exempted. [36]
- Legislation for radon related illness under workplace, safety and health compensation are also summarized.
- The information presented is in the following tables was taken from Appendix 2: Workplace Legislation and Radon - by Province and Territory of the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) and CAREX Canada, Environmental Scan of Radon Law and Policy: Best Practices in Canada and the European Union. August, 2018
- The tables on the following slides are a summary of provincial and territorial occupational health and safety legislation and its applicability to radon assessment and control.

35, 36. Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) and CAREX Canada, Environmental Scan of Radon Law and Policy: Best Practices in Canada and the European Union. August, 2018, Section 4.3.4, 1.3.2.2.

# Summary: Appendix 2: Workplace Legislation and Radon - Manitoba

**Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) and CAREX Canada, Environmental Scan of Radon Law and Policy: Best Practices in Canada and the European Union. August, 2018**

| Province / Territory | Radon Legislation | Radon Compensation |
|---|---|---|
| **Manitoba** | General Duty clauses. Workplace Health and Safety Act, CCSM c. W210 at s. 4(1) provides that every employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his workers.<br><br>Indoor air quality. The Workplace Health and Safety Regulation, Part 4, General Workplace Requirements, provides for rules on air quality and ventilation. At s. 4.1 it states that an employer must, as much as is reasonably practicable, ensure that (a) a workplace has appropriate air quality and is adequately ventilated, and (b) contaminants and impurities are prevented from accumulating in the air at a workplace.<br><br>Radon specific provision. The Workplace Health and Safety Regulation requires employers to develop and implement safe work procedures respecting the use of radiation in the workplace and incorporates the ACGIH publication Threshold Limit Values for Chemical Substances and Physical Agents and Biological Indices (s. 18.2).When workers in a workplace are, or may be, exposed to levels of radiation in excess of the limits, an employer must implement procedures that control exposure to radiation in the workplace (18.3). | **Compensation**: There is a general compensation clause in The Workers Compensation Act, CCSM c W200 at s. 4(1) which provides for compensation for personal injury by accident. Accident is defined to include events, and occupational diseases that happen at work (s. 1(1)). |

# CANADA LABOUR CODE (CLC)

**The Canada Occupational Health and Safety Act**

Part X Hazardous Substances
Ionizing and Non-ionizing Radiation
Section 10.26(4)

> *"No employee, other than a nuclear energy worker as defined in Section 2 of the Nuclear Safety and Control Act, shall be exposed in the course of any year to a concentration of radon that on average, over the year, is higher than 800 Bq/m$^3$."*

- Harmonization with Health Canada Guideline of 200 Bq/m$^3$ is expected Spring 2024.
- The CLC or associated regulations make no legal requirement for employers to test for radon. However, as in all indoor environments, the only way for an employer to know if they are compliant with the CLC is to test. [30]

# CANADA LABOUR CODE(CLC)

**(2) Subsection 10.26(4) of the Regulations is replaced by the following:**

**(4)** An employee, other than a *nuclear energy worker* as defined in section 2 of the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act*, must not be exposed in any year to a concentration of radon that, on average, over the year, is higher than 200 $Bq/m^3$.

**34 Section 11.28 of the Regulations is replaced by the following:**
**11.28 (1)** If one of the following devices that is capable of producing and emitting energy in the form of electromagnetic waves or acoustical waves is used in a work place, the employer must apply the following document set out for that device:

**(2)** An employee, other than a *nuclear energy worker* as defined in section 2 of the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act*, must not be exposed in any year to a concentration of radon that on average, over the year, is higher than 200 $Bq/m^3$.

# HARMONIZATION

Health Canada, in consultation with the Federal Provincial Territorial Radiation Protection Committee, modified the guidelines to lower the threshold for acceptable levels of radon in a dwelling from 800 Bq/$m^3$ to 200 Bq/$m^3$ due to scientific studies that conclusively linked the risk of developing lung cancer to levels of radon.

The proposed Regulations would amend the acceptable level of radon and set it to 200 Bq/$m^3$ in the COHSR to be consistent with Health Canada's guidelines and would add it to the OGOSHR . The radon requirement is not in the MOHSR or the AOHSR , as radon exposure is not an issue in these workplaces. The proposed Regulations would repeal the radon limit from the OBTOHSR, as radon exposure is not an issue on board trains .

# REGULATORY ANALYSIS

The scope of the analysis is limited to the Canadian workplaces subject to Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*, which encompass approximately 1.3 million Canadian workers, including approximately 29 000 Indigenous workers on First Nation reserves and in Inuit and Metis communities.

# REDUCTION IN EXPOSURE

A study by Darby et al.[footnote14] found that the cumulative absolute risks for lung cancer by age 75

| Radon | People Who Do Not Smoke | People Who Smoke |
|---|---|---|
| 0 $Bq/m^3$ | 0.41% | 10.1% |
| 100 $Bq/m^3$ | 0.47% | 11.6% |
| 400 $Bq/m^3$ | 0.67% | 16.0% |
| 800 $Bq/m^3$ | 0.93% | 21.6% |

A Health Canada study found the average radon concentration for federal buildings with mean radon levels above 200 $Bq/m^3$ was 399 $Bq/m^3$.[footnote15] Extrapolation from the values in the Darby et al. study[footnote15] found the overall reduction in lung cancer risk from a decrease in radon levels from 399 $Bq/m^3$ to 200 $Bq/m^{3*}$ was 0.13% for non-smokers and 2.9% for smokers.

This excess risk was then adjusted to 0.02% for non-smokers and 0.56% for smokers, in order to reflect actual time spent at the workplace.

***Radon levels post-mitigation can achieve 90%+ reduction, therefore greater reduction in exposure and less excess risk.**

# TESTING AND MITIGATION COSTS

It is estimated that 3.56% of work sites (buildings) tested would have mean radon levels above 200 Bq/$m^3$ and will require mitigation. This is based on radon testing findings by Health Canada.[footnote19] Average costs to test are estimated at approximately $534, and the costs of mitigation are estimated at approximately $3,717 for the average workplace.[footnote20]

### Monetized costs

Costs are summarized in the following nine tables below:

**Table 2: Radon provisions**

| Description of cost (affected stakeholders) | First year: 2023 (current dollars) | Final year: 2042 (current dollars) | Total (present value) | Annualized value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cost of radon testing** | $12,414,610 | $51,297 | $12,901,547 | $1,217,815 |
| **Cost of radon mitigation** | $3,025,350 | $12,726 | $3,146,154 | $296,975 |
| **Radon testing and mitigation (all employers with offices)** | **$15,439,960** | **$64,024** | **$16,047,701** | **$1,514,789** |

# HEALTH CANADA'S RESOURCES

| Preview | Format | Title | Published date |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Infographic | Radon and energy retrofits | 2023 |
|   | Infographic | Take action on radon | 2016 |
|  | Brochure | Radon gas: it's in your home | 2017 |
|   | Brochure | Radon in real estate | 2021 |

Find them online at:

https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-risks-safety/radiation/radon/resources.html

# RESOURCES for order: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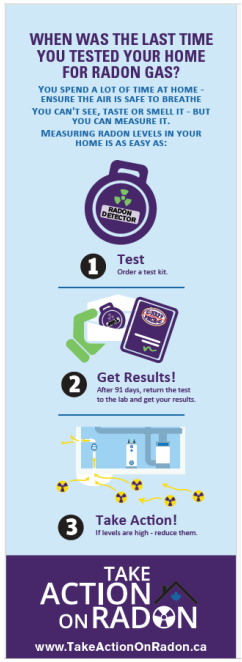



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