



BC Centre for Disease Control
AN AGENCY OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY

Protocols for Radon Testing in BC Homes

Where in BC to Test:

Radon testing for homes is **recommended** in areas east of the Coast Mountains [e.g. the Kootenays, the Okanagan Valley, Northern Interior, North Thompson, and Peace River]. Approximately 1% to 5% of these interior homes may have radon levels in excess of Canada's national guideline of 800 Bq/m³ [~ 20 pCi/l]. About 5% to 40% may have levels in excess of 200 Bq/m³ [5 pCi/l], which is the level being proposed for use in Canada.

Radon testing of homes is **not recommended** in the areas west of the Coast Mountains [e.g. Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast, and Prince Rupert]. Testing to date for this area indicates it is very unlikely that any home would have elevated radon levels.

Test Procedures:

Testing for radon in homes can be carried out by the homeowner using a long-term monitor, such as an alpha-track type radon detector. **Long-term** electret sensors are also acceptable. At least one (1) monitor should be placed in the **main living area** of the home at a height of about 4' to 7' above the floor. It should be left there for a minimum of three (3) heating months and preferably for a six (6) to twelve (12) month period. The monitor is then returned to the supplier who provides the results to the customer.

Do not place a detector in the basement unless there is a fully occupied suite or regularly used bedroom. Radon detectors should not be located in bathrooms or kitchens. Also, do not place the detector in enclosed closets or other areas in the home where there is little air movement. The intent of the test is to determine the average radon levels that the occupants are exposed to.

Short-Term Test Devices:

Other types of radon detectors, such as charcoal canisters and electronic "sniffer" devices, are available but not recommended for evaluating radon in homes since they give a short-term reading [e.g. over three (3) days] rather than a long-term average radon level. However, short term test devices may be of some use in screening homes for radon levels, such as during real estate transactions.

Additional Information:

Additional information on radon testing, how to obtain detectors and methods for radon reduction can be obtained from the BC Centre for Disease Control's Radiation Protection Services in Vancouver: Tel: 604.660.6633 or BCCDC website: <http://www.bccdc.org>.

Environmental Radiation Assessment Program

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