



BC Centre for Disease Control
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Protocols for Radon Testing in BC Homes

Where in BC to Test

While all residents of BC are encouraged to test their homes for radon, those living in areas of the province where previous testing has shown that indoor radon levels are high in particular should test their homes to ensure levels are below the national guideline of 200 Bq/m³. Areas of BC known to have elevated radon in homes are: areas east of the Coast Mountains, including the Kootenays, the Okanagan Valley, Northern Interior, North Thompson, and Peace River. Approximately 5% to 40% of these interior homes may have radon levels in excess of Canada's national guideline.

Previous testing has shown that areas west of the Coast Mountains [e.g. Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast, and Prince Rupert] tend to have low residential radon levels (i.e. below 200 Bq/m³).

Test Procedures

Testing for radon in homes can be carried out by the homeowner using a long-term monitor, such as an alphatrack type radon detector. **Long-term** electret sensors are also acceptable. At least one monitor should be placed in the **main living area** of the home at a height of about four to seven feet above the floor. It should be left there for a minimum of three heating (i.e. winter) months and preferably for a six to twelve 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, kitchens or hallways. 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 (for example, over three 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 Resources

For information on:

- ✓ Radon health risks, see HealthLinkBC (<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca>)
- ✓ Radon testing and methods of radon reduction, see the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (www.nccch.ca)
- ✓ Please see our [Radon Testing in Canada document](#).
- ✓ Where to obtain a radon test kit? Please note that the following organizations make radon test kits available at discounted rates: BC Lung Association (<http://www.bc.lung.ca/>), Northern Health Authority (<http://www.northernhealth.ca/>) and Donna Schmidt Memorial Lung Cancer Prevention Society (<http://ddschmidt.shawwebpace.ca>).

Environmental Radiation Assessment Program

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