

COMMUNICATING RADON HEALTH RISKS – RADON TESTING PROJECT

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

A Radon Testing Project being conducted by Shared Services BC (SSBC) will be completed in the fall and winter of 2015/2016 in a sample of buildings owned, managed and leased by SSBC.

In 2007 Health Canada established a health guideline of 200 Bq/m³, above which action is recommended to reduce occupant exposure levels. Phase one of the Radon Testing Project will be conducted in a sample of government owned, leased and managed residential and commercial buildings to test for radon and to determine any requirement for mitigation. Phase two will include all government owned, leased and managed residential and commercial buildings.

COMMUNICATING RADON HEALTH RISKS

Most British Columbians are unaware of the health risks associated with radon gas exposure. SSBC, the British Columbia Lung Association and the Public Service Agency are working together to promote healthy homes and workplaces by starting to test government owned, managed and leased buildings.

KEY MESSAGES

- Radon is a colourless, odourless, tasteless gas produced by the radioactive decay of uranium in soil, rock and water.
- Radon can find its way into any building where the foundation is in direct contact with the soil.
- Indoors, radon can get trapped and with the potential to accumulate to high levels.
- The only way to know if a building has high levels of radon is to test.
- Radon has been shown to cause lung cancer over many years of exposure to high levels.
- Radon is estimated to be the second leading cause of lung cancer, after smoking.
- An estimated 16% of annual lung cancer deaths in Canada can be attributed to radon exposure.
- Smoking and exposure to high levels of radon leads to an estimated 1 in 3 lifetime risk of developing lung cancer.
- Exposure to high levels of radon over many years leads to an estimated 1 in 20 lifetime risk of developing lung cancer.
- There are no noticeable side-effects from immediate radon exposure.
- The only known health impact from radon exposure is lung cancer.

Lung cancer is a serious disease and people may have questions beyond the key messages provided in this document.

Any serious health related concern should be addressed to a person's primary care physician.

Once testing is complete, and lab results known, they will be provided to SSBC and Facilities Management Units. Tenants will be notified of the results once they have been reviewed. In the interim, if you require additional information or have any concerns you can visit www.radonaware.ca, contact your Facilities Management Unit or the Public Service Agency at myhr@gov.bc.ca.