

September 23, 2025

Dear School Superintendents, Principals and Managers,

Re: Radon Gas

From 2022 to 2024, Interior Health (IH) coordinated a Radon in Schools Testing Project which invited 17 public school districts and 53 independent schools to voluntarily test their schools for radon. Of the 407 school building sites available to test, 293 sites participated. Information on [Radon Measurement and Mitigation in Schools](#) is available on the BC Centre for Disease Control website, including a [map](#) with detailed information about the geographic variation of indoor radon levels recorded in homes across the province.

This project has now concluded, and we wish to thank school personnel who responded, tested and, where necessary, took steps to mitigate radon gas.

For those schools that have not yet tested using [Health Canada guidelines](#), IH teams remain available to provide technical information and guidance on radon gas, testing and mitigation.

Why radon is a concern

The International Agency for Research on Cancer concludes that [radon causes lung cancer](#). (1)

The geology of British Columbia's Interior is rich in elements that produce radon gas. Surveys of indoor environments show that the proportion of structures within B.C.'s Interior that exceed the Canadian Guideline is among the highest in Canada. In many Interior Health communities, one in three residential structures tested exceed the Canadian Guideline, compared to one in 113 residential structures tested in Metro Vancouver. (2)

Interior Health recommendations

Based on our current knowledge of radon and its health impacts, IH strongly recommends that all public and private schools in the IH region be [comprehensively tested](#) for radon and take steps to minimize radon exposure.

If radon levels exceed the Canadian Guideline, there are simple cost-effective methods that reduce radon exposure. Radon levels should be as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA) below 200 Bq/m³.

Because indoor radon exposure is a serious health concern, IH highly recommends that schools communicate radon test results and mitigation plans with parents, guardians, staff and students.

In May 2017, radon testing became an IH licensing requirement for daycares, including pre and after-school programs located within schools. Accordingly, IH continues to collaborate with provincial partners to work towards a statutory requirement for routine testing and mitigating radon in schools.

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, syilx, and Tšilhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

About radon testing

Radon testing is not a one-time activity. Health Canada and other organizations provide guidance on testing frequency. IH recommends re-testing as follows:

- After renovations impacting the structure or energy efficiency of the school
- After work near the foundation of the school
- After any radon mitigation
- Within two years if radon levels are between 100 Bq/m³ and 200 Bq/m³
- Every five years as part of regular testing

The optimal time to test for radon is during the cold season for a minimum of three months (90 days). Now is the ideal time to determine the quantity of detectors needed for testing your school buildings, as this coordinates with the Ministry of Education and Child Care annual end-of-September deadline for associated funding (if required).

Although free detectors are no longer available through the IH Radon in Schools Testing Project, IH staff are available to assist with testing and mitigation questions, and with procuring detectors at a bulk purchase rate.

The [resources](#) section of our [radon information page](#) contains up-to-date information on radon, including [Health Canada's Guide for Radon Measurements in Public Buildings](#), that can help determine the number of detectors required to adequately test your indoor spaces. BC Centre for Disease Control also has [guidance for radon measurement and mitigation in schools](#).

For support and more information

If you require assistance or support, please reach out to Greg Baytalan, Specialist Environmental Health Officer at greg.baytalan@interiorhealth.ca or 250-469-7070 ext.12273, or contact [IH's Office of the Medical Health Officer](#).

Sincerely,



Dr. Silvina Mema
Deputy Chief Medical Health Officer



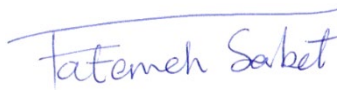
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References:

1. World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer. IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Volume 43. UK. 1988. Available at: [IARC Publications Website, Man-Made Mineral Fibres and Radon](#). (accessed August 15, 2025)
2. Cross-Canada Survey of Radon working group: a collaboration between the Evict Radon National Study, BC Centre for Disease Control and Health Canada. Cross-Canada Survey of Radon Exposure in the Residential Buildings of Urban and Rural Communities. Canada. Cross Canada Radon Survey. 2024. Version 1.1 Available at: www.crosscanadaradon.ca (accessed August 15, 2025)

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