



Support. Educate. Regulate.

Recommendations to the Federal Government to Protect Canadians from Radon Gas Exposure

1. Support;

Amend the Excise Tax Act to be GST exempt for radon measurement devices and radon mitigation costs associated with installing a radon mitigation system (supplies & labour) done by a C-NRPP certified measurement or mitigation professional.

Eliminating the Government Sales Tax (GST) on radon measurement and mitigation is an upstream and economically effective measure that protects Canadians from exposure to radon gas. Removing the GST helps alleviate the financial barrier that nearly one-third of Canadians report prevents them from mitigating their home for radon¹, which has an average cost of \$3500.² The financial impact of removing GST from radon measurement and mitigation is balanced by the reduced cost spent on lung cancer treatment in Canada, which was estimated to have been two billion dollars in 2020.³ This amount does not account for the personal financial impact that treatment can have on patients and their families.

Requiring a Canadian National Radon Proficiency Program (C-NRPP) certified professional to conduct the radon mitigation should be made mandatory to receive this GST tax exemption. Doing this ensures the mitigation is done properly and in accordance with Canadian guidelines. Long-term radon tests approved by C-NRPP can be deployed with the assistance of a certified professional or by the homeowner themselves.

2. Educate;

Ensure MPs inform their constituents about radon via householders to support improved radon awareness and decreased lung cancer rates in Canada.

Lung cancer is the most common cancer in Canada.⁵ In 2020, approximately 30,000 Canadians developed lung cancer, resulting in 21,000 deaths.⁵ Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking and accounts for 16% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada.⁶ Radon is a contributing factor in the deaths of approximately 3,360 Canadians each year, which is more than 1 in every 100 deaths in the country.⁶ While 10.3 million homes in Canada (17.8% of all homes) have radon levels above Health Canada's radon guideline of 200 Bq/m³,⁹ less than 10% of Canadians have tested their homes for radon.⁶ Furthermore, only 56% of Canadians have ever heard of radon gas.⁷ These statistics highlight the urgent need for increased public awareness and education campaigns in Canada on radon.

The government voice should be utilized to protect Canadian people. Canadians look to government to help understand, manage, and mitigate potential threats to lung health like radon exposure. Health Canada's National Radon Program distributes postcards to areas in Canada with high levels of radon. The 2020 postcard campaign drove website visits to Canada.ca/radon up by over 4,000% and boosted traffic to TakeActiononRadon.ca by more than 1,200%.⁴

As all MPs are eligible to prepare and distribute four householders each year to all constituents about parliamentary activities and issues, we recommend that your upcoming mailing includes information on radon in Canada. Informing constituents of the second leading cause of lung cancer in the country and how they can protect themselves against it through testing and mitigation efforts can help to lower the incidence of lung cancer in Canada.

3. Regulate;

Ensure that any messaging, education, and grants for energy efficiency includes radon awareness and funding for radon measurement and mitigation.

Energy efficient retrofits like replacing windows and doors, air-sealing a home, or upgrading insulation are all effective and economic ways to lower greenhouse gas emissions and individual utility bills. However, while airtight homes and buildings reduce energy loss, they can also negatively impact indoor air quality. Energy retrofits reduce air exchange between the inside and outside of the building and, as a result, can increase radon gas levels within the building.⁸

It is recommended that all future federal grant programs that provide reimbursement to upgrade the energy efficiency of buildings should also address indoor air quality concerns like radon. Ensuring radon testing and mitigation is included in energy efficiency funding programs and making radon testing a requirement following energy retrofits in a building is a simple and effective way to improve indoor air quality and can save lives.

References

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