

RADON

IN NEW BUILD DWELLINGS

REDUCING RADON RISK

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is released from rocks and soil.

The different types of rocks and soil across NI produce different amounts of radon.

The radon level in outside air is very low but it can build up inside buildings, particularly modern well-insulated buildings.



WHAT IS THE RADON POTENTIAL OF MY SITE?

The radon potential of a site depends upon the nature of soils and rock underlying the site. An atlas has been published which shows the highest radon potential for each 1km grid square in NI.

The most recent atlas (published August 2015) may be viewed at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/radon-indicative-atlas-for-northern-ireland
or can be searched interactively at
www.ukradon.org/information/ukmaps

THE RISK

Radon produces tiny radioactive particles in the air we breathe.

Radiation from these particles damages our lung tissue, and over a long period may cause lung cancer.

The higher the level and the longer the period of exposure, the greater the risk will be.

Therefore it is important to ensure that homes are resistant to the build-up of radon gas.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE RISK?

The most basic new build radon protective measure consists of a well-installed radon-proof barrier across the sub-floor of the dwelling.

It is normally possible to link this to the damp-proof course that will be installed.

Underfloor ventilation to suspended concrete floors or a radon sump may also be suitable.

These measures are simple and relatively cheap to install at the building stage and are very effective at preventing the build-up of radon gas in your dwelling.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

Current Building Regulations in NI require that new build dwellings in affected areas identified in the previous 2009 atlas be protected from the ingress of radon.

However the current 2015 version of the atlas contains new areas now considered affected by radon. Prospective home builders should be aware of this.

Whilst Building Regulations do not require radon protection measures for dwellings identified in the latest 2015 atlas, it is recommended that home builders in these areas install protection measures.

You can identify if your site is in a radon affected area using the map at www.ukradon.org/information/ukmaps

WHERE TO GET FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on radon can be obtained from the following internet links:

www.ukradon.org/information

www.bre.co.uk/radon

www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/technical-booklet-c

You can also get advice by speaking directly to your local Council Building Control Surveyor and/or the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Councils : www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/local-councils-in-northern-ireland

NIEA : Email ipri@daera-ni.gov.uk

Tel 028 9056 9299

