



Curatorial Safety

Have Your Curatorial Areas Been Tested for Radon?

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that results from the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water, and it can get into air that you breathe. Radon occurs throughout the nation.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon causes several thousand deaths each year due to lung cancer. The Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, second only to smoking. According to EPA estimates, about 6.6% of all homes in the U.S. have elevated radon levels.

Radon can enter a building through:

- Cracks in solid floors
- Construction joints
- Cracks in walls
- Gaps in suspended floors
- Gaps around service pipes
- Cavities inside walls
- The water supply

Testing is the only way to know if your building has a radon problem. Ask your park Safety Officer, Chief of Maintenance, and/or Buildings and Utilities Foreman if your curatorial areas have been tested for radon. If they have not been tested yet, work with them to schedule the testing. (This might also be a good time to test all other park structures that have not been tested for radon yet.)

Testing can be short-term (2-90 days) or long-term (more than 90 days). Long-term testing will probably provide a more accurate reading. Test kits can be purchased at hardware and building supply stores or through the mail.

Fixing a radon problem can be very inexpensive. According to the EPA, most home radon problems can be fixed for an amount comparable to most minor home repairs (less than \$2500). The important thing is to ensure that your areas have been tested.

For more information on radon:

1. Contact your park Safety Officer, Chief of Maintenance, and/or Buildings and Utilities Foreman.
2. Contact your state radon office. A listing of state radon offices is available on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/contacts.html>.
3. Refer to the following Environmental Protection Agency publications:

A Citizen's Guide to Radon. Available on the web at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/radon/pubs/citguide.html#overview>.

Consumer's Guide to Radon Reduction. Available on the web at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/radon/pubs/consguid.html>.

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