

A STATEMENT BY THE RADON COUNCIL

A CAUSE FOR CONCERN

KILLER GAS IN THE HOME

Each year in the UK approximately 2,800 people are killed in motor vehicle traffic accidents, 290 in the workplace and 275 suicides and trespassers killed on our railways. Quite rightly these tragic deaths are reported in the media and very large sums of tax-payers money are spent warning people of the dangers. Considerable legislation is in place, drink driving, speeding etc., and numerous devices are installed including for example, speed cameras, traffic calming etc., to reduce this waste of life.

How many people are aware that some 2,000 deaths occur each year from the effects of radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally and is found in many parts of the U.K., with high levels concentrated in some homes. **By causing lung cancer Radon kills, indeed US statistics show that deaths from radon induced lung cancer are 6 times greater than from passive smoking.**

Yet how many people know that these deaths can be reduced by simple and inexpensive means?

The Radon Council, which is the non-profit making regulatory body for the radon industry in the UK, is concerned at this avoidable and tragic waste of lives. Despite numerous initiatives tried by successive governments over the past decade, at substantial cost to the tax-payer, **few people are even aware of the danger.** The Radon Council is advocating a revision of national policy in order to eradicate this menace, by the following means:-

- 1) Make a minor revision to CON 29 and to include radon in the proposed Home Information Packs (HIPS).
- 2) All homes both **new and old** should be required to furnish a valid and recent radon test certificate at the time of conveyancing.
- 3) Any homes found to have radon levels in excess of the current action level, should be remediated.

Although new homes will frequently include a “radon membrane” and some even a “radon sump”, experience shows that unless these are specified and installed correctly, high radon levels can still occur. Recent legislation has improved the insulation requirements for new properties, in effect reducing airflow. Radon, which enters a building from the ground, is therefore more likely to be trapped and become an increased hazard.

The additional cost of providing full radon protection, or remediation, is usually less than 1% of the value of the property. By these simple means, that do not involve any cost to the general tax-payer, the radon problem will gradually be removed from the housing stock in the UK. This will save substantial sums of public money and more importantly begin to reduce the avoidable deaths and suffering from lung cancer, due to the radon gas menace.

It is argued by some that meaningful tests cannot be conducted at the time of conveyancing. This is not the case. Reliable and internationally accepted testing methods for measuring radon already exist. These can be as short as 7 days which is a timescale that does not delay the conveyancing process, or as long as 3 months, a test that can be conducted ahead of the sale. It is important to appreciate that all essential techniques for testing and carrying out adequate radon remediation work are already in the public domain and the Radon Council publishes an annual list of approved contractors, well able to provide services or undertake this work.

Ultimately all properties should be included. This not only means NEW and EXISTING HOMES, but SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, and WORKPLACES as well. We operate stricter regimes against numerous less dangerous hazards, than we do against a known killer.

RADON IS NOT JUST A NUISANCE IT CAN KILL

PROTECTION IS AVAILABLE AND IS NOT EXPENSIVE

REMEMBER - THE LIFE THAT YOU SAVE MIGHT BE YOUR OWN!