

Engaging BC Communities in Radon Testing



Who is the Lung Association of British Columbia?

- Non-profit with roots dating back to early 1900s
- Formed in response to spread of tuberculosis
- Major funder of medical research
- Core focus: lung health programs of prevention and control
 - *Asthma, COPD, Lung Cancer, Influenza, Tuberculosis*
- Programs developed with provincial scope in-mind
- Providing education for the last 5 years on radon
 - *Received funds from MoH in 2012 to increase awareness and develop industry capacity*

What is RadonAware?

A BCLA branded public education and advocacy program focused on research, information, education and public advocacy on issues related to reducing the public health risk from radon.



Key Activities Completed

- **Industry Resources**
 - ✓ Education, Training & Incentive
 - ✓ Radon Pipe Warning Label
 - ✓ DIY Radon Book
 - ✓ Home Radon Survey
- **Public Resources**
 - ✓ Legislative & Literature Review
 - ✓ RadonAware Website
 - ✓ 4 Videos: Testing, Mitigation, Partners & Public Housing
 - ✓ Web Store Purchase Site
 - ✓ Published Reports
- **Research Projects**
 - ✓ Community Wide Testing Projects (2230 BC homes tested)
 - ✓ Aboriginal Public Housing Testing
 - ✓ Code Mitigation Study

Two Main Objectives of RadonAware

- 1. New Homes** – Implement initiatives to “Future Proof” new buildings to reduce radon exposure & related public health risk (*BC Building Code*)
- 2. Existing Homes** - Develop and launch intervention initiatives and work with other community agencies to reduce the public health risk of radon in existing housing (*community-wide testing*)



Focus of Presentation

Prince George & Castlegar Community Radon Testing

- Overview of testing projects
- Main objectives of testing projects
- Community engagement strategies used
- Outcomes achieved
- Main lessons learned



Overview of Castlegar Testing

City of Castlegar

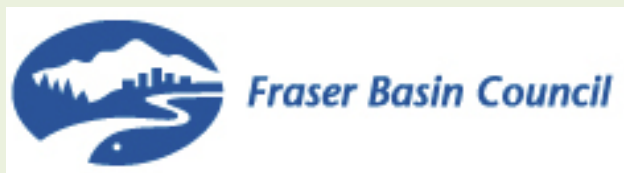
- BCLA partnered with City Building and Planning Dept.
- BCLA provided 230 test kits and marketing for free
- City office distributed kits and provided instructions
- City followed-up with participants and collected tests
- BCLA provided analysis and reporting
- City submitted report to Council



Overview of Prince George Testing

Prince George

- Partnered with the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) to coordinate project “on the ground”
- BCLA directed overall project activities and outcomes
- FREE test kits provided to participants
- FBC (and CCS) distributed and collected 2000 kits
- BCLA provided analysis and reporting



Main Objectives of Testing Projects

- **Answer the radon level question** for homeowners and tenants and at a community-wide level based on Postal Code Area
- **Determine the processes required** for testing at a community-wide level
- **Understand participant motivation** and levels of radon awareness
- **Identify project testing costs** on a community-wide level

Community Engagement Strategies

Top 3 Engagement Strategies:

1. Media:
 - TV, print, radio, Facebook, Twitter, etc...
2. FREE test kits:
 - Long-term AT-100 from AccuStar
 - Survey and instructions provided
3. Partnerships
 - Canadian Cancer Society, Fraser Basin Council, Northern Health Authority, Canadian Home Builders' Association



What Made Partnerships Effective?

- **Common goals** (reduce public health risk, educate the public)
- **Willingness to share resources** (staff time, test kits, process support)
- **Each organization contributing its strengths**
- **Collaborative problem solving** (working as a team to solve issues as they arise)
- **Communication** (emails, phone calls, conference calls, meetings)



Engagement Strategies Continued...

- **Widely distributed** test kits
- **Simple testing process** with clear instructions
- **E-mail reminders** to deploy and return tests
- **Central drop-off** location for tests
- **Mitigation information** included in reports
- **Survey** post testing



Testing Project Outcomes

1. Castlegar

- Test kits distributed: 230
- Return rate: 71.3%
- Average radon level all participants: 373 Bq/m³
- 1 in 2 homes above Health Canada's guideline

2. Prince George

- Test kits distributed: 2000
- Return rate: 71.5%
- Average radon level all participants: 185 Bq/m³
- 1 in 3 homes above Health Canada's guideline

Lessons Learned

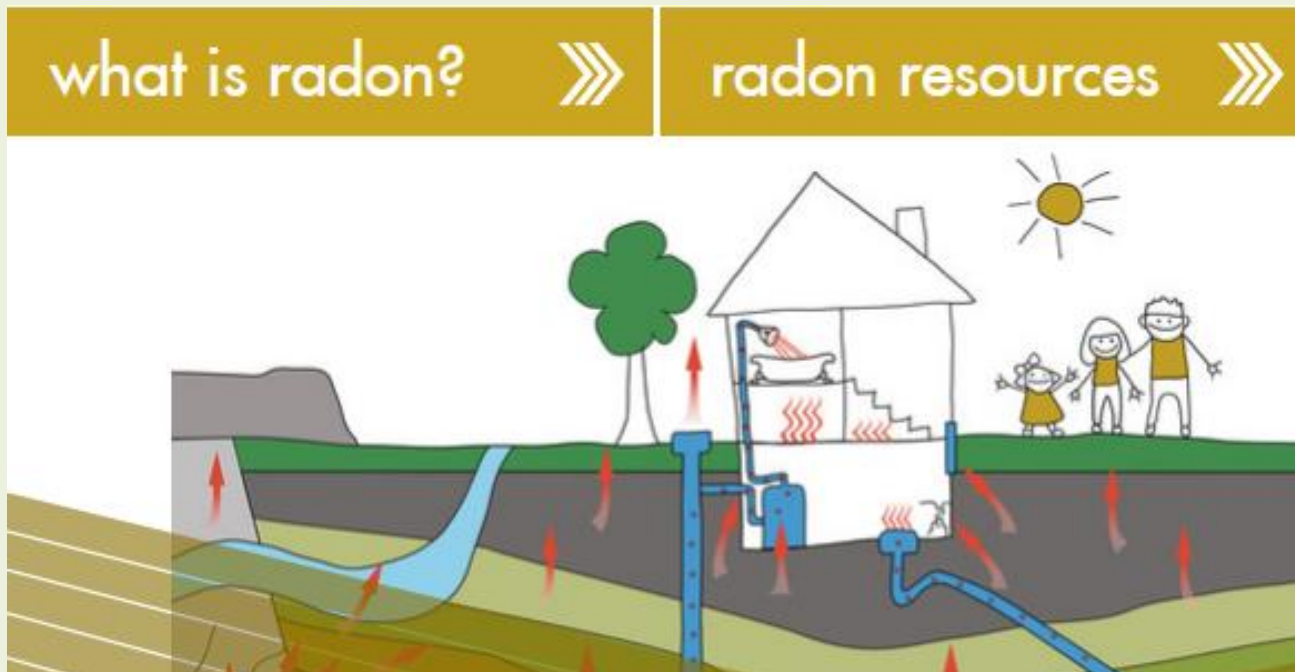
1. **Awareness** of radon health risk is low
2. **FREE** is a significant motivator to test
3. **Media** is critical for generating interest and awareness
4. **Simple** testing process essential
5. **Follow-up** reminders increase response
6. **Partnerships** strengthen the health risk message



Visit our Website

RadonAware.ca

- **Indoor Radon Studies**
- Videos, studies, published reports
- Purchase site for test kits



Questions

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