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DISTRICT OF MACKENZIE

Encourages residents to become radon aware

The District of Mackenzie is encouraging homeowners and building owners to learn more about the effects of radon, a gas which is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in Canada after smoking and second-hand smoke. The best way to learn more about your risk to radon is through testing.

Radon is a naturally occurring, colourless, odourless gas caused by the breakdown of uranium in soil and rocks. Health Canada estimates as many as 16 percent of lung cancer deaths can be attributed to radon exposure. In 2012, Health Canada released the results of a nation-wide survey which estimates 12% of people in the Northern Interior of BC are living in homes with radon levels exceeding the actionable guidelines.

Residents can get a kit at Northern Health's Public Health Protection Office at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre (fourth floor - 1600 Third Avenue). Alternatively, you can order a radon test kit at radonaware.ca.

"The best prevention against radon gas is to know if radon is coming into your home or place of work," says Dr. Sandra Allison, Northern Health's chief medical health officer. "That is why we encourage people to test their homes and talk to their employers about testing their buildings. Knowing is the first step to being able to protect you and your family."

Northern Health's radon-related public health information can be viewed www.northernhealth.ca/yourhealth/environmentalhealth/radon.

"Radon is a serious health concern, but undue exposure is preventable and certified professionals are available to help in northern B.C.," says Megan Klitch, Health Promotion Coordinator, Canadian Cancer Society. "We congratulate the District of Mackenzie for taking this leadership role in raising awareness and encouraging action."

Information about radon and its effects can be found on the Canadian Cancer Society's website.

"Exposure to radon gas is a community based issue," says Britt Swoveland, BC Lung Association RadonAware Manager. "The more people test for radon, the more we learn about the risks overall across communities. We'd like to congratulate the District of McKenzie for engaging with residents and raising awareness of this serious public health issue."

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