2023-2024

Radon testing on Selected Okanagan Workplaces and Public Radon Awareness Outreach 2023-2024

FINAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

RDCO-REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PROGRAM



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# Project Description at Launch

Goal

**Radon testing on selected Central Okanagan workplaces and public radon awareness outreach.** The combination of the supply of detectors, promotion of self-purchase, and education on the importance of testing indoor environments, including workplaces, will provide an opportunity to educate medical professionals to address radon with their clients so all collectively place radon on their routine agenda of indoor air quality maintenance for overall less indoor radon exposure.

Objectives

- Provide free radon test kits to interested workplace parties, particularly medical professional buildings, to test indoor environments in partnership with Interior Health and Take Action on Radon (TAOR) through the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (CARST).
- Provide free radon test kits to interested residents (owners and renters of indoor space) to test indoor environments in partnership with Interior Health and TAOR through CARST.
- Provide region-wide radon awareness through an online campaign and a webinar in partnership with Interior Health, TAOR through CARST and local governments within the Central Okanagan.



## Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Objective	Key deliverables	Quantitative and Qualitative Results 2023-2024									
Run a region wide radon awareness campaign and a webinar	<ul> <li>a) Provide technical support to general workplaces and specifically Medical Professional Buildings to test for radon.</li> <li>b) Provide technical support to interested residents (owners, tenants), and occupants of residential dwellings</li> </ul>	The rado survey ar The RDCC to allow e Residents	CARST updated specific instructions for participant workplaces and Resident The radon test kit envelopes included a QR code and added fields to the start/e survey and collection points information. The RDCO website was updated with the 2023 program information in early N to allow early pre-registration. Residents (owner and tenants) picked up and dropped off their detectors at t collection points.								
	<ul> <li>Acquire and deliver radon test kits through "Take Action on Radon"</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>With the support of all local governments, Interior Health, and Health Cancollection points were confirmed, and 395 test kits were initially allocate workplaces and 69% residential (renters/ owners).</li> <li>The radon kit pre-registration received an overwaresponse. Although workplaces were our main target, we received over pre-registrations. We contacted the BCCDC, and with their kind suppor provided 415 additional detectors for free handouts to cover part of the residential of 2023.</li> <li>Fall 2023 participants drop off their detectors from February 20 to 27 Residents dropped off 596 radon kits at local governments as</li> </ul>								rwhelm over <b>1,3</b> port, th residen ted dur 27, 20	
		CENTRAL OKANAGAN									
		596 DETECTORS DROPPED OFF FOR ANALYSIS FEB 28, 2024									
		RDCO, 59, Peachland, WestBank First									
		10% 15, 3% Nation, 11, 2%									
		We	Lake Country 67, 11% st Kelov	vna,					lown 5, 46		
		169, 28%									
		<ul> <li>With Interior Health and Take Action on Radon support, residents on the waitin list (from fall 2023) got a chance to receive a detector in January.</li> <li>In late January, 159 participants picked up the free detector at IH collection point and will drop it off in May.</li> <li>The total number of detectors delivered in Central Okanagan was 969: 810 and 15 in the Fall of 2023 and January 2024, respectively.</li> </ul>									
		TABLE 1. TOTAL RAD	ON DISTR	BUTION-RE	00 2023-	2024					
			Kelowna	Lake Country	Peachland	RDCO east	RDCO west	West Kelowna	WFN	Total	
		Residents HC	111	61	17	6	11	56	11	273	
		Total Workplace HC	87	13	2	0 6	0	20	0	122	
		Total HC only Extra residents by	198	74	19		11	76	11	395	
		BCCDC Extra residents by IH	220 159	24	0	0	0	171	0	415 159	
		Total Residents		_							
		HC+BCCDC +IH Total Workplace and	490	85	17	6	11	227	11	847	
		residents (HC + BCCDC + IH)	577	98	19	6	11	247	11	969	
			/ /								



	FIRST NATION Line, The Okanagan Way.
awareness through webinars and online campaigns	<ul> <li>S Local chambers of commerce; <u>Radon in the Workplace Webinar - Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (investkelowna.com)</u> and <u>Kelowna Chamber of Commerce</u></li> <li>A Central Okanagan Division of Family Practice radon article was included in their June 2, 2023, newsletter.</li> <li>Facebook ads: June 1, June 6. Paid Ads to watch the recording and pre-register on June 12-30,</li> <li>A news release on September 6, 2023, was picked up by several media. RDCO and other local governments also promoted the program through social media.</li> <li>Organic and paid social media posts from September 11 to 29, 2023 to encourage preregistration.</li> <li>Newspaper ads (one-quarter page) on September 28 and 29, 2023 and one-eighth page.</li> <li>Two webinars were delivered in October to bring awareness to workplaces and residents and to increase testing participation.</li> <li>The workplaces' lunch and learn at noon was watched by 46 and 62 participants in June and October, respectively. 166 residents have watched the webinar RDCO Radon in Residential-October 25, 2023. Take Action on Radon   Facebook</li> <li>On January 29, 2024 the TAOR team delivered another webinar; 76 residents watched it online.</li> </ul>

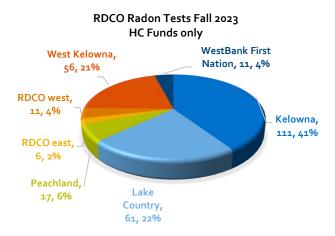


### Achievements

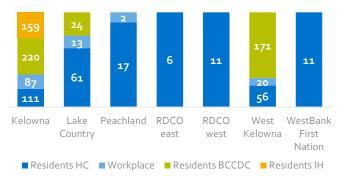
### Community and Workplace Awareness

- Successful collaboration and coordination with
- Interior Health and Take Action on Radon (TAOR) through the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (CARST), and all local governments provided workplaces and residents with radon awareness.
  - Fall 2023: **395 test kits** funded by Health Canada were delivered.
- The radon kit pre-registration received an overwhelming response. Although workplaces were our main target this year, we received over **1,350 pre-registrations**. We contacted the BCCDC, and with their kind support, we received 415 free additional detectors to cover part of the residential (owners) gap.
  - Fall 2023: **415 additional** detectors funded by the BCCDC were allocated.
- In total, 810 test kits were allocated during the fall of 2023.
- With Interior Health and Take Action on Radon support, residents on the waiting list (from fall 2023) got a chance to receive a detector this winter.
  - January and February 2024: **159** participants
  - Residents picked up the free detector at the chosen Interior Health collection points from January 29 to February 16, 2024, for drop-off from May 13 to May 17, 2024.
- Residents chose three new Interior collection points:
  - A) CHSC, 505 Doyle Avenue, Kelowna, BC, pick-up hours: Monday to Friday: 9-4 pm
  - B) Rutland Health Unit (**New Location)** North of the IGA, 285 Aurora Crescent, Kelowna, BC; pick-up hours: Monday to Friday: 9-4 pm
  - C) West Kelowna Health Centre, 160 2300 Carrington Road, West Kelowna, BC; pick-up hours: Monday to Friday: 9-4 pm

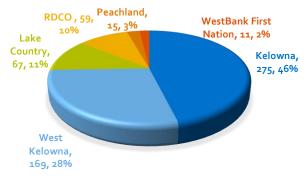
The **total number of detectors** delivered in Central Okanagan was 969; 810 in the Fall of 2023, and 159 in January 2024.







#### Central Okanagan 596 Detectors Collected Feb 28, 2024



• The total number of detectors returned to the lab, as well as the results from the 2023 and January 2024 radon awareness efforts in Central Okanagan, will be later accounted for on the BCCDC map.

Four webinars were delivered to raise awareness among 344 interested workplaces and residents. One webinar was delivered in June, two in October and one in January 2024.

- o 46 and 62 participants watched the workplaces' lunch and learn at noon in June and October.
- 160 and 76 residents watched the October 25 and January 29, 2024, RDCO Radon in Residential Dwellings webinar-. <u>Take Action on Radon | Facebook</u>



### Lessons learned

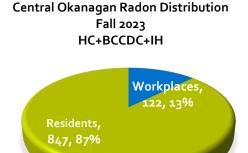
#### Workplaces

- 1. Online pre-registration helped invite residents and workplaces to participate.
- 2. The pre-registration form was edited to request dwelling information (workplace medical or general). This allowed us to determine where the test kits would be distributed and deployed so that we could plan accordingly.
- CARST updated specific participant <u>workplaces</u> and <u>Residential</u> instructions with 2023 data. CARST also called and emailed workplaces to remind them to start their kits and answer questions.
- 4. An article targeting medical workplaces was published in the Central Okanagan Division of Family Practice (CODFP) newsletter on June 2.
- 5. Despite the region-wide traditional and social media outreach, local chambers and one article, we allocated **122 detectors at workplaces**, albeit encouraging:
  - a. 49 detectors at 43 medical offices
  - b. 73 detectors at 47 general workplaces
  - c. 847 detectors at residential dwellings
    - i. 122 detectors for renters (13%)
    - ii. 725 detectors for owners (87%)

The total number of detectors distributed to workplaces and residential dwellings was 969.

#### Community Awareness

- 1. Issuing a news release helped amplify the radon awareness message.
  - a. The news release was sent on September 6, 2023, included in Appendix 1.
  - b. Here are a few media examples that picked up the news release:
    - i <u>https://infotel.ca/newsitem/free-radon-testing-kits-available-in-central-okanagan/it100362</u>
    - ii. https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/Kelowna/Okanagan businesses residents have until the end of September to register for a radon testing kit/
    - iii. <u>https://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/445235/Regional-District-of-Central-Okanagan-offering-free-radon-test-kits</u>
    - iv. https://www.iheartradio.ca/am-1150/news/rdco-is-offering-free-radon-test-kits-1.20213687
  - c. Our campaign's use of conventional and social media proved effective. Examples are shown in Appendix
    - 2.
- i. More than 79,000 impressions (cumulated data from potential media reached).



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### Challenges

• 217 detectors were not claimed from November 3 to 10. However, from November 14 to November 21, all unclaimed detectors were reassigned to people on the waiting list (Kelowna residents) on a first-come-first-served basis. The 810 detectors available were distributed in the fall.

west Kelown/

Kelowna

- Still, more than 450 residents remained on the waiting list and with Interior Health support, residents were contacted in early January; 178 residents confirmed their interest and collection point.
  - After several email reminders, the unclaimed detectors were offered on a first-come, first-served basis, and 159 additional radon kits were allocated from January 29 to February 16, 2024.

ake Count

• Despite our efforts through local chambers and the blurb included in the Okanagan Division of Family Practice (CODFP) newsletter in early May and June, pre-registration was minimal. Fall awareness work resulted in achieving higher numbers of pre-registrations.

## Recommendations

• News releases in early September are the most effective way to reach residents.

**Regional District o** 

Central Okanagan

- Webinars for different audiences are an excellent awareness approach to reach targetted audiences.
- Early access to the online pre-registration is suggested, as residents start receiving their results around April-May, and there could be additional public engagement in early spring.

# Conclusions

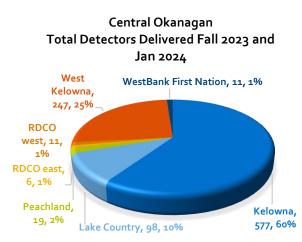
The "Radon Testing on Selected Okanagan Workplaces and Public Radon Awareness" project delivered 100% of the available detectors in 2023.

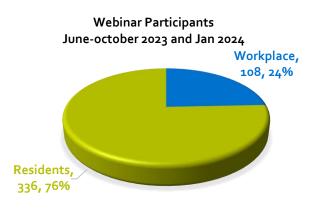
The community awareness campaign successfully engaged more than 1,350 regional residents and workplaces who pre-registered or participated in one of the four webinars.

Workplaces who signed up to participate received their detectors directly by mail. The individual follow-up with this group helped increase the use of the detectors. Based on workplace feedback, they indicated that they wouldn't have volunteered for this program if we hadn't made it easy for them.

A total of 969 detectors were delivered to residents and workplaces in the region; 395 were allocated free through Health Canada, 415 additional detectors free with BCCDC support, and 159 detectors free with Interior Health support.

Through a successful collaboration with key stakeholders, 596 residents dropped off their detectors at the six community collection points. Interior Health staff will receive the second batch of detectors in May. Most 2023 participants will receive their results by mid-April 2024, and the January participants will receive them in the summer. The final number of detectors deployed in the region during winter 2023-2024 will not be confirmed until the lab results are sent and compiled in the BCCDC repository database.







#### Appendix 1- News Release-Radon Community Awareness



Media Release

September 6, 2023

#### RDCO is offering free radon test kits

With support from Health Canada, the Regional District of Central Okanagan will be collaborating with Take Action on Radon to provide free radon test kits. While supplies last, 395 radon gas test kits are available for Central Okanagan workplaces and residents. Priority will be given to workplaces, specifically medical and healthcare professional offices (e.g., pharmacies, medical and walk-in clinics, physiotherapy, psychology, massage therapy, nutrition, chiropractor, veterinary clinics, laboratories, etc.). A limited number of kits will also be available for residential dwellings (owners and renters).

"The <u>Central Okanagan is at high risk for radon</u>, which is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers," says Nancy Mora Castro, Regional Air Quality Program Coordinator. "Testing for radon in your workplace or home is important for protecting all occupants, including you, your family or employees."

Interested applicants need to pre-register online by September 30 at <u>rdco.com/radon/</u>. Workplaces could receive up to four test kits, while residential properties are limited to one kit. The radon test kits will be distributed from October 30 to November 3 as follows:

- a. Radon test kits for medical and healthcare professional buildings/offices will be mailed directly.
- b. Radon test kits for general workplaces and residential dwellings (renters and owners) must be picked up at local government community locations and dropped back off at the end of deployment.

Those who receive a kit will be asked to follow the instructions to complete the 91-day minimum cold season test and return their kit to their local government office in late February 2024. Test results will be sent to each participant, along with information and recommendations for mitigation and lowering gas levels in early Spring 2024.

If you cannot get a free radon test kit or need more, long-term detector purchases are available through the <u>BC Lung Foundation</u>, or you may ask your local library for a discount code for purchasing a long-term radon detector. To find more information, visit <u>rdco.com/airquality/</u>.

Radon gas is an odourless and invisible gas that can be found inside any building. Radon levels can vary greatly, so the only way to accurately gauge the potential health impact is by testing. Workplaces should include radon testing as part of their indoor air quality maintenance.

Take Action on Radon is led by the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (CARST) and the Canadian Cancer Society to raise awareness about radon and its potential hazards. To learn more, please visit takeactiononradon.ca.

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Contacts: Nancy Mora Castro Regional Air Quality Program Coordinator <u>airquality@kelowna.ca</u> 250-469-8408

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### Appendix 2- Advertisement samples









Regional District of Central Okanagan June 6 at 1200 PM · @

Join us tomorrow at noon for a lunch and learn webinar, "Radon in the Workplace" available online at: www.facebook.com/CARSTradon/live\_videos

You can also pre-register to get a kit this Fall: www.smarthrips.ra/node/290. This year the free radon test kit program focuses on workplaces, particularly medical and healthcare professional offices.

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RDCO is offering free radon test kits

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Interested applicants need to pre-register online by September 30 at rices com/raden). Workplaces could preceive up to four test lots, while residential properties an initiat to zero kit. The raden test lots will be distributed from October 30 to November 3.



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Regional District of Central Okanagan

Take action on radon! Did you know radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking?

Internation This year the free radion test kit program focuses on workplaces, particularly medical and healthorae professional offices. Join the lurch and learn webinae. Radion in the Workplace, at noon on Workplace and the statistic online at: www.facebook.com/CARSTradon/live\_videos Pri-register to got a kit this Talk www.marttrips.ca/noda/256...See more

