

Research Confirms Radon Levels Should Be Measured on Floors Above Basements and Ground Floors in Multi-Family Dwellings

High radon levels could be missed in up to 20% of multi-family dwellings if radon levels are not measured on upper floors.

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-- Recent research data confirms that radon levels should be measured on

floors above the basement and ground floors in multi-family buildings to prevent missing high radon levels in the building. This study was presented at the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (AARST) International Radon and Vapor Intrusion Symposium in

Bellevue, Washington on October 24, 2022 by Dr. Tryggve Rönngqvist, Technical Manager for Radonova Laboratories.

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We wanted to answer, 'How many buildings with high radon levels would be missed if measurements were performed only on basement and ground floors?'"

Dr. Tryggve Rönngqvist

In the study, it was revealed that high radon levels (above 200 Bq/m³ or 5.4 pCi/L) would have been missed in 15-20% of Swedish multi-family houses with basements if radon levels were not measured on floors above the ground floor. Additionally, high radon levels in 5-10% of multi-family houses with slab on grade foundations would not have been discovered if radon levels had not been measured on floors above the ground floor.

Radonova has more than 400,000 radon measurements from Swedish apartments. A previous study by Dr. Rönngqvist, "[Analysis of Radon Levels in Swedish Dwellings and Workplaces](#)," evaluated data from buildings with five or more measurements performed during 2017-2020, which totaled 5,559 multi-family buildings and 3,347 workplaces. The recent research expanded on this data to study radon levels on upper floors in more detail. "The question we asked was, 'How many buildings with levels above the Swedish reference level of 200 Bq/m³ (5.4 pCi/l) would not be found if measurements were performed only on basement and ground floors?'" said Dr. Rönngqvist.

The Radonova logo, featuring the word "radonova" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The "radon" part is in dark blue and the "nova" part is in red. Below the logo, the text "The global leader in radon measurement" is written in a smaller, dark blue font.

The global leader in radon measurement

The new study includes measurements from 2014-2021 in buildings without “blue concrete” (a radon emitting building material), with at least one apartment above 200 Bq/m³ (5.4 pCi/L) on the ground floor or higher and with measurements on both the ground floor and higher floors (some buildings may not have apartments on the ground floor). The ventilation type in the buildings was taken into consideration as being natural ventilation, mechanical exhaust, or balanced ventilation with heat recovery. High radon levels on upper floors were more frequent in buildings with natural ventilation. Additionally, radon levels measured highest on upper floors in older buildings built in 1959 or earlier.



Dr. Tryggve Rönqvist

Basements and Ground Floors are Especially Important

Basements and ground floors are typically the focus of radon measurement because they are at the highest risk of elevated radon levels. In addition to basement and ground floors, the ANSI/AARST standards require that radon measurements be conducted on at least 10% of all upper floors that are occupied or intended to be occupied.

What is Radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas that leaks in from the ground and in some cases comes from building materials. Depending on the ground under the house and the type of building structure, harmful high concentrations of radon can occur. Radon is a health risk that is the second most common cause of lung cancer after smoking. It is the number one cause of lung cancer in people who have never smoked. Globally, an estimated 230,000 people suffer from lung cancer each year as a result of long-term exposure to radon. The EPA reports radon exposure being responsible for approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year.

[About Radonova](#)

Radonova is the laboratory of choice for numerous government radon surveys, as well as other public, and private sector large-scale measurement contracts around the world. A truly global laboratory, Radonova is active in over 50 countries and has performed millions of radon measurements.

Zan Jones
Radonova
+1 331-814-2200
[email us here](#)

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