

The Chief Executive  
Unitary, Metropolitan, District and  
London Borough Councils in England and  
County and County Borough Councils in Wales  
The Town Clerk, City of London  
The Clerk, Council of the Isles of Scilly  
The Sub-Treasurer, Inner Temple  
The Under Treasurer, Middle Temple

The Head of Building Control  
Unity, Metropolitan, District and  
London Borough Councils in England and  
County and County Borough Councils in Wales  
City of London  
Council of the Isles of Scilly

Approved Inspectors

The Chief Fire Officer  
Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales

The Chief Education Officer  
Local Educational Authorities in England and Wales

cc. The Chief Executive:  
County Councils in England  
National Park Authorities in England and Wales

7<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Building Regulations 2000, Schedule 1 Part C (Site preparation and resistance to contaminants and moisture)**

**New documents containing revised guidance on radon protective measures in new buildings, extensions and refurbishment projects.**

The purpose of this Circular Letter is to bring to your attention the recent publication of two documents containing revised guidance on radon. The documents are a new "*Indicative Atlas of Radon in England and Wales*" and a new 2007 edition of the Building Research Establishment (BRE) publication BR 211 "*Radon: guidance on protective measures for new buildings*".

## ***The Radon Hazard***

Radon gas decay produces alpha radiation and high exposures to radon are known to increase the risk of lung cancer, causing an estimated 1000 to 2000 cases in the UK per year. Recent studies show that the risk to smokers from radon is particularly high, because the effects of smoking and radon are more than additive. Since 1988 the Building Regulations have addressed the need to provide radon protection measures within certain new and materially altered buildings.

## ***Current position***

Currently, for assessing compliance with Part C (Site preparation and resistance to contaminants and moisture) of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2000, the approved guidance is that the areas in England and Wales in which basic or full radon protective measures should be considered for new buildings are defined by maps contained in the 1999 edition of BR 211. This is formalised by the reference to BR 211:1999 in paragraph 2.40 of Approved Document C (which provides statutory guidance on compliance with Part C).

## ***The new documents***

In November 2007, following substantial recent surveys, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the British Geological Survey (BGS) jointly issued new and more detailed and precise maps published as the revised ***Indicative Atlas of Radon in England and Wales***. This is available on the HPA website [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk). The new HPA / BGS maps, which are based upon 1 km square grids, are intended to form the basis for defining areas where basic or full radon protective measures may or may not be required in new buildings, extensions and refurbishments in England and Wales.

In addition, BRE have revised the previous 1999 edition of BR 211 in line with the new maps in the revised *Indicative Atlas of Radon in England and Wales*. The recently published 2007 edition of BR 211 includes the new maps indicating the areas where 'basic' or 'full' radon protection will need to be considered. This new edition of BR 211 supersedes the earlier 1999 version and the new BRE radon maps showing the areas requiring protection are also available on the BRE website - [www.bre.co.uk/radon](http://www.bre.co.uk/radon).

**Please note that both of these documents indicate that radon protective measures are likely to be needed in considerably more areas in England and Wales than suggested previously.**

The new maps within BR 211 are designed to be easier to use as the shading of each grid square on the maps indicates the highest requirement for protective measures in that area. A dark-shaded square indicates an area where full protective measures may be required, although within that 1 km grid there could also be some areas that will require only basic or no protective measures. Similarly, a light-shaded square which indicates areas where basic protective measures may be required could well include some locations where no radon protective measures are required. Either the highest indicated protection level should be adopted or if precise requirements are sought these

can be obtained by a detailed search of the HPA / BGS map data available through the BGS GeoReports service at <http://shop.bgs.ac.uk/Georeports/>. Alternatively, for existing plots and work on building extensions and refurbishments, provided a full address with postcode is available the provision for radon protective measures can be obtained from [www.ukradon.org](http://www.ukradon.org).

### ***Approved Document C***

Communities and Local Government (“the Department”) intends formally to revise the reference in Approved Document C in due course so that it refers to the new BR 211:2007 guidance document, which also includes information on conversions, refurbishments and extensions. Until that revision is made, the Department recommends as good practice the use and application of the latest set of published radon maps and the revised guidance in BR 211:2007. Addressees may also wish to draw the revised guidance to the attention of those proposing to carry out building work in areas affected by the revisions to the documents.

Any enquiries on this Circular Letter should be addressed to Richard Shipman at [richard.shipman@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:richard.shipman@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shona Dunn', written over a faint circular stamp.

Shona Dunn  
Head of Sustainable Building Division