



By Appointment  
To Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II  
Damp Proofing and Timber Treatment Specialists  
ProTen Services Ltd., Bath

## **Radon: A Ticking Time-Bomb for Employers**

*Things in the radon world are certainly hotting up, even if the weather is not! With new research published stating that 370 employees every year are dying from radon exposure received whilst at work, top lawyers have begun questioning whether radon is 'the new asbestos'.*

ProTen Services have been involved in the field of radon gas for over 20 years, and over this time have encountered much apathy towards the issue. It appears, however, that the time has finally arrived for the killer gas to receive the attention it deserves and that this may, in part, be driven by the threat of legal action.

Research into occupational cancers carried out by Dr Lesley Rushton at Imperial College, London has recently been published in the Occupational Medicine journal. The findings reveal that each year in the UK, approximately 370 people are dying from lung cancer developed due to exposure to radon whilst in the workplace.

According to official figures from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), on average 230 people are killed in workplace accidents every year. Whilst this figure illustrates a significant loss of lives, it also represents almost 150 fewer fatalities annually than those caused by radon exposure alone.

In a briefing posted on national law firm [Shoosmiths](#)' website, a Partner at the firm advises that radon has the potential to follow in the footsteps of asbestos in terms of litigation brought by former employees.

In an article entitled, '[Radon: The new asbestos?](#)' Ron Reid, who regularly acts in cases involving health & safety legislation writes, "Asbestos has been seen over recent years to be a significant cause of litigation between organisations and their former employees. Exposure to radon gas has the potential to follow suit." Mr Reid goes on to advise employers to carry out radon tests of their premises and take remedial action where necessary.

This latest sign of impending interest comes just weeks after the Health Protection Agency announced they were advising a shake up of regulations. Public consultation has begun on proposals to lower the domestic 'action level' from 200 bq/m<sup>3</sup> to 100 bq/m<sup>3</sup> and apply this new lower level not only to domestic properties, but also to buildings where members of the public spend long periods of time. If implemented, these new regulations would mean that radon levels in buildings such as hospitals, care homes and schools would need to be under 100bq/m<sup>3</sup>, compared to the present requirement for them to be only under 400bq/m<sup>3</sup>.

As revisions to both Building Regulations and British Standards on the cards for 2010 will lead to greater radon protection requirements in new developments, extensions and renovations, radon is set to become a talking point in many circles.

With the longest track record in the country for providing radon remediation and protection, ProTen Services' experienced staff are on hand to provide advice and solutions to anyone concerned about radon.