

INVESTIGATION 9**WHAT ARE THE ETHICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS OF RADON?****INTRODUCTION**

Radon in the environment is an important issue for geologists, radiation scientists, and health workers. But radon concerns extend into many other areas of your life in ways that are complex and far-reaching. For example, the financial consequences of finding high concentrations of radon in a house can be considerable. Mitigation costs are generally not more than a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, but a well-publicized house with high radon levels can be perceived as a major problem which affects property values throughout the neighborhood, even for nearby homes that do not have problems. A neighborhood's radon reputation has the potential to attract or discourage potential home buyers. What is the legal and moral responsibility of the owner of a rental property if he/she knows that it contains high radon? What are the responsibilities of the realtors involved in the sale of homes? Does a seller have a moral responsibility to inform potential buyers of known radon concentrations in the home? Should the results of radon measurements be confidential? **In this exercise you will draft new legislation relating to the radon issue.**

OBJECTIVE

To explore the legal and ethical issues of radon contamination and to construct statewide legislation to deal with these issues.

PROCEDURE

1. Your class has been elected to the New Jersey Legislature. The first item on the agenda this year is to remedy the lack of effective legal statutes to deal with mounting citizen complaints regarding radon problems in homes throughout the state. Draft new legislation to cover the rights and responsibilities of all parties involved in real estate transactions and rentals with respect to health threats from radon. Ensure that your new legislation shall promote fairness and protection of basic human rights, while being careful to not add unnecessarily complex bureaucracy to the system.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

2. Describe in detail your proposed legislation (use additional sheets of paper, as necessary).

3. Write down the names of special interest groups that might have concerns about laws that you enact with regard to radon.

4. Write a paragraph stating what you think will be the major concerns each group will have about radon legislation. What would each group not want to see in the laws?

5. Select class members to represent special interest groups, and conduct a legislative debate on the pros and cons of the proposed legislation.

