

## APPENDIX F

# RADON CONTROL METHODS

*The provisions contained in this appendix are not mandatory, except for areas specified in Section AF101.1*

### SECTION AF101 SCOPE

**AF101.1 General.** This appendix contains requirements for new construction in Baker, Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, Polk, Washington and Yamhill counties where radon-mitigating construction is required. Additional counties may be added as specified in Chapter 83, 2010 Oregon Laws (Senate Bill 1025), Section 2.

**Chapter 83, 2010 Oregon Laws (Senate Bill 1025) is not part of this code but is reproduced here for the reader's convenience:**  
**SECTION 2.**

(1) The Building Codes Structures Board and the Residential and Manufactured Structures Board shall adopt design and construction standards for mitigating radon levels in new residential buildings that are identified under the structural specialty code as Group R-2 or R-3 buildings and new public buildings. In adopting the standards, the boards shall give consideration to any standards recommended by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for radon mitigation systems in buildings.

(2) The boards shall make the design and construction standards for mitigating radon levels applicable in:

- (a) Baker, Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, Polk, Washington and Yamhill Counties; and
- (b) Any county for which the boards, after consultation with the Oregon Health Authority, consider the standards appropriate due to local radon levels.

(3) The Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services may authorize a municipality that administers and enforces one or more building inspection programs under ORS 455.148 or 455.150 to also administer and enforce any applicable standards for mitigating radon that are adopted by the boards.

(4) The director, in consultation with the boards, may adopt rules for the implementation, administration and enforcement of this section.

### SECTION AF102 DEFINITIONS

**AF102.1 General.** For the purpose of these requirements, the terms used shall be defined as follows:

**SUBSLAB DEPRESSURIZATION SYSTEM (Passive).** A system designed to achieve lower sub-slab air pressure relative to indoor air pressure by use of a vent pipe routed through the *conditioned space* of a building and connecting the sub-slab area with outdoor air, thereby relying on the convective flow of air upward in the vent to draw air from beneath the slab.

**SUBSLAB DEPRESSURIZATION SYSTEM (Active).** A system designed to achieve lower sub-slab air pressure relative to indoor air pressure by use of a fan-powered vent drawing air from beneath the slab.

**DRAIN TILE LOOP.** A continuous length of drain tile or perforated pipe extending around all or part of the internal or external perimeter of a *basement* or crawl space footing.

**RADON GAS.** A naturally-occurring, chemically inert, radioactive gas that is not detectable by human senses. As a gas, it can move readily through particles of soil and rock and can accumulate under the slabs and foundations of homes where it can easily enter into the living space through construction cracks and openings.

**SOIL-GAS-RETARDER.** A continuous membrane of 6-mil (0.15 mm) polyethylene or other equivalent material used to retard the flow of soil gases into a building.

**SUBMEMBRANE DEPRESSURIZATION SYSTEM.** A system designed to achieve lower-sub-membrane air pressure relative to crawl space air pressure by use of a vent drawing air from beneath the soil-gas-retarder membrane.

### SECTION AF103 REQUIREMENTS

**AF103.1 General.** The following construction techniques are intended to mitigate radon entry in new construction. These techniques are required in areas where designated by Section AF101.1.

**AF103.2 Subfloor preparation.** A layer of gas-permeable material shall be placed under all concrete slabs and other floor systems that directly contact the ground and are within the walls of the living spaces of the building, to facilitate future installation of a sub-slab depressurization system, if needed. The gas-permeable layer shall consist of one of the following:

1. A uniform layer of clean aggregate, a minimum of 4 inches (102 mm) thick. The aggregate shall consist of material that will pass through a 2-inch (51 mm) sieve and be retained by a 1/4-inch (6.4 mm) sieve.
2. A uniform layer of sand (native or fill), a minimum of 4 inches (102 mm) thick, overlain by a layer or strips of geotextile drainage matting designed to allow the lateral flow of soil gases.
3. Other materials, systems or floor designs with demonstrated capability to permit depressurization across the entire sub-floor area.

**AF103.3 Soil-gas-retarder.** A minimum 6-mil (0.15 mm) [or 3-mil (0.075 mm) cross-laminated] polyethylene or equivalent flexible sheeting material shall be placed on top of the gas-permeable layer prior to casting the slab or placing the floor assembly to serve as a soil-gas-retarder by bridging any cracks that develop in the slab or floor assembly and to prevent concrete from entering the void spaces in the aggregate base material. The sheeting shall cover the entire floor area with separate

sections of sheeting lapped at least 12 inches (305 mm). The sheeting shall fit closely around any pipe, wire or other penetrations of the material. All punctures or tears in the material shall be sealed or covered with additional sheeting.

**AF103.4 Entry routes.** Potential radon entry routes shall be closed in accordance with Sections AF103.4.1 through AF103.4.10.

**AF103.4.1 Floor openings.** Openings around bathtubs, showers, water closets, pipes, wires or other objects that penetrate concrete slabs or other floor assemblies shall be filled with a polyurethane caulk or equivalent sealant applied in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

**AF103.4.2 Concrete joints.** All control joints, isolation joints, construction joints and any other joints in concrete slabs or between slabs and foundation walls shall be sealed with a caulk or sealant. Gaps and joints shall be cleared of loose material and filled with polyurethane caulk or other elastomeric sealant applied in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

**AF103.4.3 Condensate drains.** Condensate drains shall be trapped or routed through nonperforated pipe to daylight.

**AF103.4.4 Sumps.** Sump pits open to soil or serving as the termination point for sub-slab or exterior drain tile loops shall be covered with a gasketed or otherwise sealed lid. Sumps used as the suction point in a sub-slab depressurization system shall have a lid designed to accommodate the vent pipe. Sumps used as a floor drain shall have a lid equipped with a trapped inlet.

**AF103.4.5 Foundation walls.** Hollow block masonry foundation walls shall be constructed with either a continuous course of *solid masonry*, one course of masonry grouted solid, or a solid concrete beam at or above finished ground surface to prevent passage of air from the interior of the wall into the living space. Where a brick veneer or other masonry ledge is installed, the course immediately below that ledge shall be sealed. Joints, cracks or other openings around all penetrations of both exterior and interior surfaces of masonry block or wood foundation walls below the ground surface shall be filled with polyurethane caulk or equivalent sealant. Penetrations of concrete walls shall be filled.

**AF103.4.6 Dampproofing.** The exterior surfaces of portions of concrete and masonry block walls below the ground surface shall be dampproofed in accordance with Section R406 of this code.

**AF103.4.7 Air-handling units.** Air-handling units in crawl spaces shall be sealed to prevent air from being drawn into the unit.

**Exception:** Units with gasketed seams or units that are otherwise sealed by the manufacturer to prevent leakage.

**AF103.4.8 Ducts.** Ductwork passing through or beneath a slab shall be of seamless material unless the air-handling system is designed to maintain continuous positive pressure within such ducting. Joints in such ductwork shall be sealed to prevent air leakage and shall be performance tested to

demonstrate conformance to ODOE duct performance standards.

Ductwork located in crawl spaces shall have all seams and joints sealed by closure systems in accordance with Section M1601.4.1. Ductwork shall be performance tested to demonstrate conformance to ODOE duct performance standards.

**AF103.4.9 Crawl space floors.** Openings around all penetrations through floors above crawl spaces shall be caulked or otherwise filled to prevent air leakage.

**AF103.4.10 Crawl space access.** Access doors and other openings or penetrations between *basements* and adjoining crawl spaces shall be closed, gasketed or otherwise filled to prevent air leakage.

**AF103.5 Crawl space mitigation system.** In buildings with crawl space foundations, a system complying with Section AF103.5.1 or AF103.5.2 shall be installed during construction.

**Exception:** Buildings in which an approved mechanical crawl space ventilation system or other equivalent system is installed.

**AF103.5.1 Passive submembrane depressurization system.**

**AF103.5.1.1 Ventilation.** Crawl spaces shall be provided with vents to the exterior of the building. The minimum net area of ventilation openings shall comply with Section R408.1 of this code.

**AF103.5.1.2 Soil-gas-retarder.** The soil in crawl spaces shall be covered with a continuous layer of minimum 6-mil (0.15 mm) polyethylene soil-gas-retarder. The ground cover shall be lapped a minimum of 12 inches (305 mm) at joints and shall extend to all foundation walls enclosing the crawl space area.

**AF103.5.1.3 Vent pipe.** A plumbing tee or other *approved* connection shall be inserted horizontally beneath the sheeting and connected to a 3- or 4-inch-diameter (76 mm or 102 mm) fitting with a vertical vent pipe installed through the sheeting. The vent pipe shall be extended up through the building floors, terminate at least 12 inches (305 mm) above the roof in a location at least 10 feet (3048 mm) away from any window or other opening into the *conditioned spaces* of the building that is less than 2 feet (610 mm) below the exhaust point, and 10 feet (3048 mm) from any window or other opening in adjoining or adjacent buildings.

**AF103.5.2 Crawl space ventilation and building tightness.**

**AF103.5.2.1 Ventilation.** Crawl spaces shall be provided with vents to the exterior of the building that comply with Section R408.1 of this code. The minimum net area of ventilation openings shall not be less than 1 square foot (0.0929 m<sup>2</sup>) for each 150 square feet (14 m<sup>2</sup>) of under-floor space area.

**AF103.5.2.2 Ventilation openings.** Ventilation openings shall comply with Section R408.2. Operable louvers, dampers, or other means to temporarily stop the ventilation shall not be permitted.

**AF103.5.2.3 Building tightness.** Dwellings shall be tested with a blower door, depressurizing the dwelling to 50 Pascal's from ambient conditions and found to exhibit no more than 5.0 air changes per hour. A mechanical exhaust, supply, or combination ventilation system providing whole-building ventilation rates specified in Table N1101.1(3) or ASHRAE 62.2 shall be installed within the dwelling unit.

**AF103.6 Passive subslab depressurization system.** In *basement* or slab-on-grade buildings, the following components of a passive sub-slab depressurization system shall be installed during construction.

**AF103.6.1 Vent pipe.** A minimum 3-inch-diameter (76 mm) ABS, PVC or equivalent gas-tight pipe shall be embedded vertically into the sub-slab aggregate or other permeable material before the slab is cast. A "T" fitting or equivalent method shall be used to ensure that the pipe opening remains within the sub-slab permeable material. Alternatively, the 3-inch (76 mm) pipe shall be inserted directly into an interior perimeter drain tile loop or through a sealed sump cover where the sump is exposed to the sub-slab aggregate or connected to it through a drainage system.

The pipe shall be extended up through the building floors, terminate at least 12 inches (305 mm) above the surface of the roof in a location at least 10 feet (3048 mm) away from any window or other opening into the *conditioned spaces* of the building that is less than 2 feet (610 mm) below the exhaust point, and 10 feet (3048 mm) from any window or other opening in adjoining or adjacent buildings.

**AF103.6.2 Multiple vent pipes.** In buildings where interior footings or other barriers separate the sub-slab aggregate or other gas-permeable material, each area shall be fitted with an individual vent pipe. Vent pipes shall connect to a single vent that terminates above the roof or each individual vent pipe shall terminate separately above the roof.

**AF103.7 Vent pipe drainage.** All components of the radon vent pipe system shall be installed to provide positive drainage to the ground beneath the slab or soil-gas-retarder.

**AF103.8 Vent pipe accessibility.** Radon vent pipes shall be accessible for future fan installation through an *attic* or other area outside the *habitable space*.

**Exception:** The radon vent pipe need not be accessible in an *attic* space where an *approved* roof-top electrical supply is provided for future use.

**AF103.9 Vent pipe identification.** All exposed and visible interior radon vent pipes shall be identified with at least one *label* on each floor and in accessible *attics*. The *label* shall read: "Radon Reduction System."

**AF103.10 Combination foundations.** Combination *basement/crawl space* or slab-on-grade/crawl space foundations shall have separate radon vent pipes installed in each type of foundation area. Each radon vent pipe shall terminate above the roof or shall be connected to a single vent that terminates above the roof.

**AF103.11 Building depressurization.** Joints in air ducts and plenums in *unconditioned spaces* shall meet the requirements

of Section M1601. Thermal envelope air infiltration requirements shall comply with the energy conservation provisions in Chapter 11. Fireblocking shall meet the requirements contained in Section R302.11.

**AF103.12 Power source.** To provide for future installation of an active sub-membrane or sub-slab depressurization system, an electrical circuit terminated in an *approved* box shall be installed during construction in the *attic* or other anticipated location of vent pipe fans. An electrical supply shall also be accessible in anticipated locations of system failure alarms.

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