



*Dear Colleagues and Clients,*

*Recently, I was attending ERC's Global Workforce Symposium in Atlanta, Georgia, and as I always do when I'm lucky enough to spend time around my colleagues, I took note of the care and concern that our industry has for the transferees*

*we support and for those with whom we work. At HPI, though our core focus is on radon testing and remediation, we strive to give back that care and concern by educating our stakeholders on radon and other indoor air issues that impact health and quality of life.*

*So as colder weather brings beauty and color, brisk days, warm evenings by a welcome fire, and more time spent indoors, we've pulled together some information that may be of help to you as you "season" your home.*

*Since these days tend to be a little wetter than normal, be on guard for mold and know what to do if it's present in the house. If you're already stoking the flames on the hearth, please be sure that your chimney is clear and your fireplace is in good working order. And when you gather around your fireplace or your table for the upcoming holiday, we wish you and your family a safe, healthy and loving Thanksgiving.*



*Phillip A. Kosanovich  
President  
HomeBuyer's Preferred, Inc.*

## Radon: A Historical Perspective

Those who think the emergence of radon as a toxic substance is a relatively recent issue may be surprised to find that it has origins in the 1800s, when German workers first mined uranium. In 1900, radon was discovered, and as early as the 1930s, doctors and scientists had linked radioactivity in mines to lung-related illnesses.

In 1987, the EPA conducted a study on indoor radon levels, and by September 1988, the U.S. Surgeon General stated that radon was the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, and further noted that, "Indoor radon gas is a health problem. Radon causes thousands of deaths each year. Millions of homes have elevated radon levels. Most homes nationally should be tested for radon. When elevated levels are confirmed, the problem should be corrected."

In 1993, the EPA and the Surgeon General reissued a joint recommendation for radon testing of all homes below the third floor.

### RADON TIMELINE

1879	German Uranium Miners Exhibit Significant Illness
1900	Discovery of Radon
1930s	Radioactivity in Mines Linked to Lung Cancer
1960s	Homes Built on Uranium Mine Waste in Colorado
1984	Nuclear Power Plant Engineer Stanley Watras: Radiation Contamination Detected on Self and In His Home
1987	US Study on Indoor Radon Levels Released by EPA ( <i>BEIR IV Report: "Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation"</i> )
1988	NRC Releases Study Confirming EPA Findings
1999	NRC Releases BEIR VI Report, Confirms EPA Findings
2000	U of IA Study Confirms Radon Exposure in Residential Environments Significantly Associated With Lung Cancer Risk

## Chim-chim-a-nee: How's Your Fireplace Working?

This is the time of year when a cozy fire sounds like a great idea. But before you open that flue and turn up the flames, make sure the path is clear for the smoke to exit your house properly! About 5,000 fires a year are attributed to chimneys and chimney connectors serving heating systems burning liquid and other fuels. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that all chimneys be inspected annually with cleaning, maintenance, and repairs performed on an as-needed basis. The Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) says these three elements are necessary to ensure a safe and properly functioning chimney:

1. A complete chimney inspection;
2. Performance of necessary chimney repairs; and
3. The mechanical sweeping of the chimney and the removal of creosote and other potentially hazardous material.

All of these functions should be performed by a professional chimney sweep, of course. Don't know where to find one? CSIA can help you identify a Certified Chimney Sweep™ nearby.

Just go to [www.csia.org/home/sweeps.html](http://www.csia.org/home/sweeps.html) to find one in your area!

## What's Behind the Mold Maze?

The relocation and real estate industries look at mold largely from the perspective of disclosure, so we often get a crash course in why something becomes an issue to a homesale transaction. But what's the real story behind the health hazards and presence of mold? We turned to Aerotech Laboratories to provide a quick but detailed accounting of mold and want to share their clear explanation of this "eukaryotic organism" with you!

*"Mold is an all-encompassing term to describe the growths such as fungi, mushrooms, rusts, mildew, and yeast. Molds are eukaryotic organisms (have a defined nucleus) that lack flagella and reproduce by means of spores. There are only a few places on earth that are uninhabitable by mold. As an expected part of the environment, they are present almost everywhere and vary naturally in genera and concentrations based upon geographic locations and seasonal conditions.*

*There are an estimated 100,000 accurately described species of fungi and at least as many species waiting to be discovered. Almost all of these fungi are aerobes, meaning they require oxygen to survive. They do not ingest their food but rather absorb nutrients by attacking dead organic matter or parasitizing living organisms. Many live in the soil and take an active part in the decomposition of organic matter. Unfortunately, many porous building materials such as drywall, wallpaper, and insulation are either constructed of, or contain some type of organic material.*

*When building components become moist from flooding or excessive humidity the fungi will initiate the reproductive phase of their life cycle and produce spores. It is their ability to reproduce very rapidly through these spores that make them thrive virtually anywhere. As long as moisture is present, microbial growth will continue unchecked until the moisture and/or nutrient sources are removed.*

*Certain fungi or fungal products (i.e. mycotoxins) can be the primary causes of human disease. Systemic, opportunistic or dermatophytic infections can occur from over 100 species known to affect humans. However, the majority of fungi found in the environment are unable to cause infectious disease unless the exposed individual is severely immunocompromised. The most common health effect from exposure to fungi is allergy like symptoms, mucous membrane irritation, headache, fatigue, and cold/flu-like symptoms.*

*High levels of fungi in an indoor environment as compared to normal outdoor levels are of particular concern. In the event that fungal contamination is determined within a dwelling, a professional investigation is essential to thoroughly evaluate the occupant space and determine appropriate clean-up measures."*

Read "Is Toxic Mold Growing?" at  
[realestatecoalition.org/library/toxicmold.shtml](http://realestatecoalition.org/library/toxicmold.shtml)

**Avoiding Mold and Mildew in the Home...** According to [stopallergy.com](http://stopallergy.com), an online clearinghouse of information on allergies, treatment, and environmental control measures, the most effective way to avoid mold growth in the home is to keep the indoor relative humidity below 45 percent year-round. Using a dehumidifier during humid times of the year and continual monitoring with a humidity gauge are recommended. Any direct leakage of water in the basement or through walls should be corrected, and materials that have been contaminated with mold (such as carpets, clothing, books, boxes and upholstered furniture) should be discarded if they cannot be adequately cleaned to remove mold. The doctors at [stopallergy.com](http://stopallergy.com) also suggest that if you suspect your home is contaminated with mold, one way to determine the extent of the problem is with the "Allergen Alert Kit" available through their web site. They also note that HEPA air cleaners are effective at reducing mold spores in the home, but should not be substituted for fixing structural problems that admit water and foster mold growth.

**Aerotech Laboratories, Inc.**  
[www.aerotechlabs.com](http://www.aerotechlabs.com)

**Get your residential indoor air quality tools at [www.stopallergy.com](http://www.stopallergy.com)!**

As a special courtesy to HomeBuyer's Preferred clients, [stopallergy.com](http://stopallergy.com) is extending a 15% discount on all of the products listed on its website and in its catalog. To take advantage of the offer, simply contact Jeff Dorsey toll-free at 877.566.3786 or e-mail

[HPIsavings@stopallergy.com](mailto:HPIsavings@stopallergy.com) and identify yourself as a client (or friend) of HPI!

## HPI WEBSITE WATCH!

The Homebuyer's Preferred website has a full page of resources to help you with radon issues and connect you to industry resources! Check it out at <http://www.homebuyerspreferred.com/resour.htm>

## HealthyAIRreport

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2 Science Road • Glenwood, IL 60425  
1.800.325.5506 • 708.755.7011 fax  
[hpi@homebuyerspreferred.com](mailto:hpi@homebuyerspreferred.com)  
[www.homebuyerspreferred.com](http://www.homebuyerspreferred.com)