



European Radon Solutions Database

Prepared by
: ERRICCA 2 *European Radon Research and Industry Collaboration Concerted Action*
European Commission Contract N°: FIRI-CT-2001-20142

Existing Buildings

Generic Solution

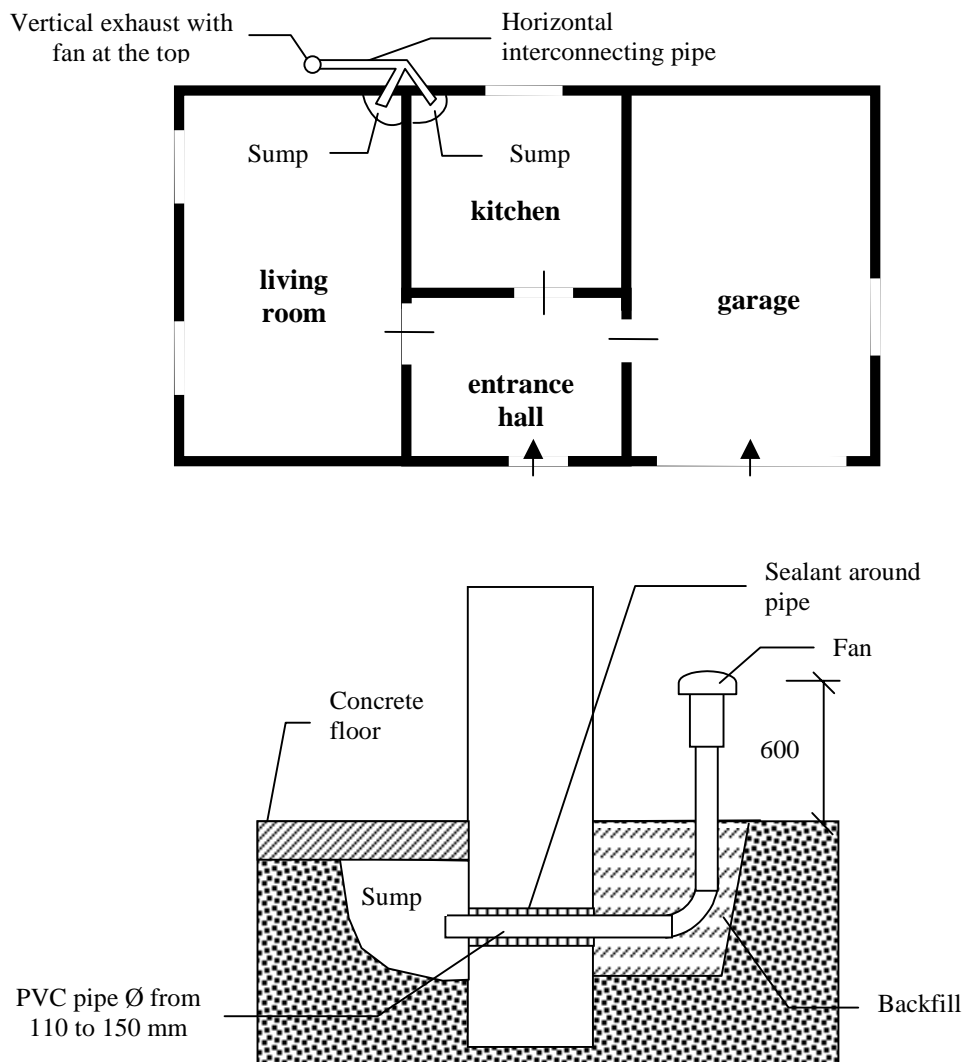
Sheet N°

CZ/GS/06

Type **EXTERNAL MINI SUMP SYSTEM**

Country **Czech Republic**

Illustration



Description

This system is designed to lower the air pressure under the building and to decrease the radon concentration in the sub-slab region. The air pressure is lowered by means of a fan, which draws air from one or two sumps excavated beneath the existing floors. Each sump should have a diameter 0,2 – 0,3 m. If internal foundations divide the underfloor space into several compartments, it is recommended to insert a sump to each compartment. Installation is usually provided from the chase excavated along one side of the house. After fixing the pipework, the chase is backfilled.

Fans

The most commonly used types of fans are paddle-wheel roof fans. These fans should have a flow rate from 100 m³/h to 350 m³/h at a pressure difference from 250 Pa to 150 Pa and power consumption between 40 and 70 W. The power of fan is controlled by means of voltage regulator. To minimise negative effects (reduced underfloor temperatures and increased air exchange rate) the fan should be switched to intermittent mode with the frequency of operating periods depending on soil permeability, floor tightness and radon concentration in the soil.

Fans should be resistant to weathering and to moisture condensation inside pipes. Location of the fan at the top of the vertical exhaust pipe causes no visual problems with the condensation. To avoid disturbing noise effects the fan should be installed away from the occupied rooms and on the least obtrusive side of the dwelling.

Pipework

Standard PVC-U pipes with the diameter from 110 to 150 mm can be used. Exhaust outlet should be located well away from windows, doors and other vents.

All pipe penetrations through foundation walls should be carefully sealed by gun applied flexible acrylic or low modulus silicone sealants or by expanding polyurethane sealants.

When to use the system

This form of sub-slab depressurization and ventilation systems is convenient for houses without cellars or basements. The advantage of this solution is that it causes no obstructions in the living space of the house and it requires less material to construct. It is suited for use in cases where it is not possible to install vertical pipes inside the living space of the house.

Pre-installation Diagnosis

To find source rooms (radon entry routes) and to prepare information for the effective design of the remedial measure, these parameters must be measured:

- Radon concentration in all habitable rooms performed at least by one weak measurements under conservative conditions (lower ventilation and good condition for radon entry into the house)
- Radon concentration in the soil gas in 15 points around the house (the measuring depth is 0,8 m)
- Permeability of the soil around the house
- Radon concentration in sub-floor layers and permeability of sub-floor layers
- Changes of soil permeability with depth

Typical radon reductions achieved

The effectiveness of such systems varies between 70 and 98 %, which means that indoor radon concentration decreases to 30 % up to 2 % of the initial values. The effectiveness is mainly influenced by the quality of the design, by the vertical profile of soil permeability and by the air tightness of the building substructure. The effectiveness decreases with the presence of internal foundations and partial basements, which limit the extension of the underpressure from the sumps.

Limitations

Among the disadvantages of this solution belong higher labour consumption due to the excavation works and affecting of the house surroundings. The system is not suitable for houses, where the external excavations cannot be performed.

The radius of 6 m usually limits the area that can be serviced by one radon sump. For sumps placed close to the external wall it means, that the sump can have an influence over the area of approximately 50 m².

Common failure modes

The system can fail only in these situations:

- fan with inadequate pressure/flow rate characteristic is used,
- soil layers under the house have very low permeability,
- house owner switches off the system.

System enhancements

The intermittent operation of fans is recommended. The merits are: savings in operation costs, prolonged life of fans and reduced negative effects to subsoil (drying, freezing etc.). Operating periods of the fan should be adjusted according to continuous measurements of indoor radon concentration.

Numerical modelling is recommended for the optimisation of the design (number and location of sumps in dependence on the house substructure and soil characteristics). At this time three models are available: TLAK3D that solves pressure and air velocity fields in three dimensions, WIND2D solving temperature fields as a result of heat transfer caused by conduction and convection of soil air and RADON2D that calculates radon concentration fields in two dimensions.

Further Information

More detailed information can be found in the Czech Standard CSN 730601 "Protection of houses against radon from the soil", in detailed guides published by State Office for Nuclear Safety and on website www.suro.cz. All these information are in Czech language.

Information in English:

- Jiránek. M, Neznal M., Neznal M.: Czech Experience with Sub-slab Depressurization Systems. In: Radon Investigations in the Czech Republic VII, pp.119-124, Prague, 1998
- Jiránek. M.: Efficiency and Side Effects of Sub-slab Depressurization Systems. In: Radon Investigations in the Czech Republic IX, Prague, 2002

Date Prepared : **January 2003**

