

Radon Exam Test Taking Tips

Tip #1: Not all radon questions are created equal!!!

Use the information to create a “divide and conquer” strategy to improve your passing odds. This guide will help you divide questions into three different categories. You conquer by beginning to master the first two categories before coming to class. We’ll help you with the third category in classroom discussions.

Category 1: Straight memorization of definitions and requirements. Completing the written pre-class assignments and the *Basics of Radiation and Radioactivity* unit will give you a head-start on key issues on the exam.

Category 2: Basic radon math using relationships. For some of us, our last math class may have been taken before Ronald Reagan’s presidency! If it’s been a while, you may want to review basic math operations. Basic radon math requires nothing more than addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. It makes sense to clean out those math cobwebs before you come to class, and you can start with our *Basic Radon Math Review* guide.

Category 3: Applications of radon concepts. These are best handled in class discussion with our instructors, and we give you practice tests in class as part of our instructional package.

Tip #2: Become friends with key concepts before arriving to class

Think about the challenge you are facing: You’re being asked to master concepts of radiation physics and protocols of the radon industry only hours after you are first introduced to them. That’s just plain hard. Make it easier by taking time before class to review and become introduced to these fundamental concepts:

- The structure of atoms, including atomic mass, atomic number
- Radioactive decay, including the half-life
- Types of ionizing radiation and their features
- Definition and calculations of Working Level, Working Level Month and Equilibrium ratios

Tip #3: The “most right” answer wins!

ERRTC instructor Bill Brodhead notes that many radon test questions have an answer that is partly correct, and one that is more correct. You will often be able to narrow your choice down to those two. Once there, think about reasons or conditions why one answer might not hold and then eliminate that one. Look for key words in questions, such as “always, never, or only” that could make one answer more right or more wrong than your other choice. We’ll discuss this more in class, but the moral is: read each question carefully and look for the key words that can lead you to the “most right” answer.

More Test Taking Tips – For Any Long Multiple Choice Test!

Tip #4: Read all directions carefully before beginning.

Tip #5: Budget your time. Ideally you should go through the test at least three times:

1. First, complete the questions you are confident of and can answer quickly (You can choose to attempt to answer all questions on the first pass, but keep in mind your budgeted time per question to assess your pace and ensure test completion within the allotted time). Be sure to read **all** answers before choosing one and compare each to the answer you have already formulated in your head.
2. Second, go back and work through the tougher questions that require more time. Use a marking system to know which questions you need to come back to; cross off answers as you eliminate them so you do not have to reread them upon return. Use a question mark for uncertain answers but be sure to erase stray marks on computer-scored tests.
3. Third, if time permits, review your work as a final check before turning in your exam. Re-read **all** questions carefully to ensure that you understand what is being asked. Double check for any careless mistakes, skipped questions, and/or misinterpretation of directions.

Tip #6: For difficult questions, **underline key words** to help you define the important concepts of the question.

Tip #7: Use the process of elimination to your benefit. Look for clues in the question itself or the types of answers given.

Tip #8: Change answers only after thoughtful consideration, not just because you were unsure the first time. Do not “over think” the question.

Tip #9: Check your answers against your answer sheet. Erase stray or misleading marks.

Tip #10: Use the test itself to help you get to the answers; sometimes the answer or a clue that triggers your memory is in another question.

Tip #11: Use relaxation techniques such as taking five deep breaths or counting down to 10 (in your head!) if you find yourself becoming tense or freezing. Don't spend too much time on one question if it is causing you anxiety. Move on and return to the question when you have completed the rest of the test.

Tip #12: If you do not know an answer, **guess!** There is no penalty for wrong answers, but credit is never given for a blank response.