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Russia Shuts Down Radioactive Kindergarten in Siberia

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A kindergarten in a coal-mining region of Siberia has been temporarily shut down after an inspection uncovered high levels of the radioactive gas radon.

Humans cannot see, smell or taste radon, a gas that causes cancer. It is created from the natural decay of uranium in soil and rocks and can seep into homes through cracks in basements or cellars.

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A court in the Kemerovo region town of Mariinsk announced Monday it had suspended a local kindergarten's operations for 30 days until Sept. 27 over excess levels of radon.

Radon levels were found to be four times above normal in one of the kindergarten's nap

rooms, the court said.

Radon levels above the normal level of 200 becquerels per cubic meter (Bq/m3) were also found in the kindergarten's playrooms, hallway and medical rooms, as well as in the administrator's office.

The court decision can be appealed within 10 days, but it said a representative of the kindergarten had agreed with it and reportedly said that steps were being taken to cut radon levels.

The World Health Organization says that indoor radon levels should not exceed 100 Bq/m3.

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