



**Radiation Safety  
Institute of Canada**  
Institut de radioprotection du Canada

Radiation Safety &  
Wellness Webinars



*April 18, 2024*



## **Commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Elliot Lake Miners' Strike**

*RSIC Presenter: Lynn MacDonald  
Natalia Mozayani*

*Invited Guests: John Perquin (USW – retired)  
Pam Warkentin (C-NRPP, CARST, TAOR)  
Dr. Anne-Marie Nicol (SFU, BC Lung, TAOR)*

**Good Science in Plain Language®**



- Audio and video
  - During the presentation, from the presenters only
  - Captions: More>Language and speech>Turn on live captions
- Use the **Chat** feature to talk to discuss with everyone
- Use Q&A feature to ask questions for Q&A portion
- Posted on webinar page
  - Video, answers to questions, copy of the slides
- Follow up email will be sent
  - Topics covered, time of attendance



- Statement of commemoration
- Geographical and historical context
- Guest Interview
  - John Perquin, USW ret.
- Guest presentation
  - Pam Warkentin, CARST/C-NRPP/TAOR
  - Dr. Anne-Marie Nicol, SFU/BC Lung/TAOR
- Q&A
  - Time permitting
- Wellness break
  - Anastasiya Zhuravska, Salem Dance Co.



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# Statement of Commemoration



Image created by Bryan James (Bryan00009) 09/04/2006., Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



## Context



FIGURE 1 Geographical distribution of current metallic and non-metallic mining operations in Ontario.

Ham, J. M., Report of the Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines 7 (1976).  
Toronto, Ontario: Ministry of the Attorney General, Province of Ontario.



MÉTALLOS

## Unity and strength for workers

The United Steelworkers union (USW) is the largest private-sector union in North America, with more than 225,000 members in Canada, and 850,000 members in North America in nearly every economic sector.





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# ELLIOT LAKE STANDARD

Vol. 18 — No. 54

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 1974

15c per copy

## Denison Mines Remains Paralyzed As Mine Workers Strike Goes On

ELLIOT LAKE — Operations at Denison Mines Ltd., remained paralyzed over the weekend as striking workers demanded cost of living increases and immediate attention to a long list of safety and health problems.

A wild-cat strike began April 18 when Denison apparently failed to act on a request for talks on a cost of living pay supplement. Pickets blocked the mine access road leading from Highway 108 and turned back workers reporting for shift.

By Sunday the situation was complicated in the wake of a Denison offer in writing of a special economic allowance amounting to 15 cents an hour

for all members of the United Steelworkers of America Local 5762; bargaining agents for most underground and surface workers.

The offer was unacceptable to the workers because of clauses omitting statutory holidays, days off for vacations, etc., from the agreement. A major bone of contention apparently was a condition that the allowance was contingent on a return to work of all employees and the operation of the plant's "stream" for a full 24 hours.

Gib Gilchrist, an official of the USWA, arrived in Elliot Lake to hold talks with members of the local. He said Sunday

that the problems went beyond the cost of living. Meetings with local members had indicated a determination to remain on strike until satisfactory agreements had been reached on all points, he said.

"The 15 cents an hour the members are talking about would be on all hours worked, and they are proposing that a continuing cost of living clause be included in their existing contract. This would be one cent per hour for every 1.4 increase in the cost of living index."

The Denison offer, Gilchrist said, was below what other mine workers have received from

companies operating in the Sudbury basin.

On the safety and health problems listed by members of the local, Gilchrist said that questions were to be raised in the House of Commons in Ottawa and in the Ontario Legislature by MP Maurice Foster (Algoma), and MPP John Lane, (Algoma-Manitoulin).

Additionally, Gilchrist said, the union was making immediate representations to Minister of Mines, Energy and Natural Resources Hon. Leo Bernier asking that Ontario's Chief Engineer of Mines be dispatched to Elliot Lake to inspect conditions and equipment under-

ground at Denison.

"Our members have listed 54 items of safety and health," Gilchrist said, "and have been told that management will reply to these items by Thursday."

Among the items listed are conditions in crusher areas, lack of toilet facilities underground and in the mill areas and faulty equipment.

Gilchrist said that meetings held in Elliot Lake accurately reflected the mood of all local members. "I have never experienced better meetings. The men expressed concern and determination in a quiet-fighting way."

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**Personal Health News** **MEDIA PLANET** 27TH DECEMBER 2014

HOME LUNG HEALTH BONES & JOINTS ABOUT US

Personal Health News ► Lung health ► Learning From The Past: Reflecting On The Radon Tragedy In Elliot Lake

## Learning From The Past: Reflecting On The Radon Tragedy In Elliot Lake

**LUNG HEALTH** The single biggest case of deaths directly related to radon exposure in Canada happened as far back as the 1970s and 1980s, when at least 220 miners in Elliot Lake, Ontario died of lung cancer from years of exposure in the town's uranium mines.

**Dr. Fergal Nolan**  
Retired President & CEO, Radiation Safety Institute of Canada (RSIC)

f 0 t g+ in p




Photo: United Steelworkers' Archives

Monument commemorating lives lost in Elliot Lake.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20231205224410/http://www.personalhealthnews.ca/lung-health/learning-from-the-past-reflecting-on-the-radon-tragedy-in-elliott-lake/>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Take Action on Radon' website. The header includes navigation links: HOME, ABOUT, NEWS, CONTACT, FRANÇAIS, and social media icons for Facebook and Twitter. A search bar is located on the right. Below the navigation is a 'TAKE ACTION ON RADON' logo and a menu with 'Test', 'Protect', 'Learn', and 'Resources', followed by a purple 'GET STARTED' button. The main content area has a background image of a house and the heading 'About Us'. The text describes the initiative as a national effort funded by Health Canada to bring together radon stakeholders. It lists the advisory team as the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (CARST) and the Canadian Cancer Society, accompanied by their logos. A paragraph explains the success of the initiative depends on stakeholder participation. A section titled 'Check out some of our current programs:' lists five items with checkmark icons: Free RADON test kits for communities (linked to '100 Radon Test Kit Challenge'), Resources for various stakeholders, Quarterly Stakeholder Meetings, Central list of Radon events in Canada, and Radon Reduction Sweepstakes. A concluding paragraph states the organization's commitment to all Canadians, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. At the bottom, a call to action reads 'The only way to know is to test! Test your home for radon!' with a purple 'FIND OUT HOW' button.



HOME ABOUT NEWS CONTACT FRANÇAIS

**TAKE ACTION ON RADON** Test Protect Learn Resources **GET STARTED**

### About Us

Take Action on Radon is a national initiative, funded by Health Canada, to bring together radon stakeholders and raise awareness on radon across Canada.

The current advisory team is made up of the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists (CARST), and the Canadian Cancer Society.

  Canadian Cancer Society Société canadienne du cancer

The success of this initiative hinges on the participation and dedication of hundreds of radon stakeholders coast to coast. From radon professionals and community champions to radon researchers, public health officials, and programs at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels: radon awareness is a team effort.

#### Check out some of our current programs:

- ✓ Free RADON test kits for communities – [100 Radon Test Kit Challenge](#)
- ✓ Resources for various stakeholders
- ✓ Quarterly Stakeholder Meetings
- ✓ Central list of Radon events in Canada
- ✓ [Radon Reduction Sweepstakes](#) to encourage Canadians reducing radon levels.

Take Action on Radon is proud to unite members from across Canada, which encompasses the traditional territory of many First Nations, Métis Peoples, and Inuit whose ancestral footsteps and rights extend beyond the colonial boundaries that exist today. We respectfully honour these Peoples' rights, history, and relationships with this Land.

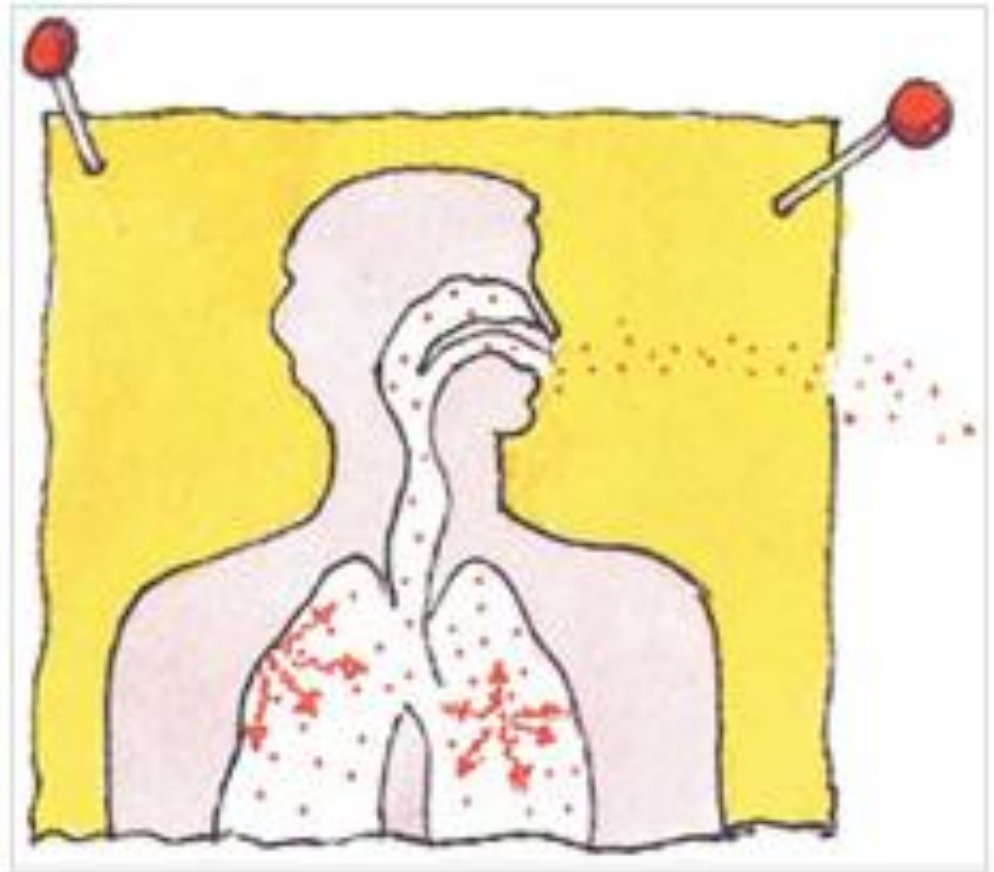
**The only way to know is to test!**  
Test your home for radon! **FIND OUT HOW**

<https://takeactiononradon.ca/>

Inhalation of Radon gas is the

-LEADING cause of lung cancer in NON-SMOKERS

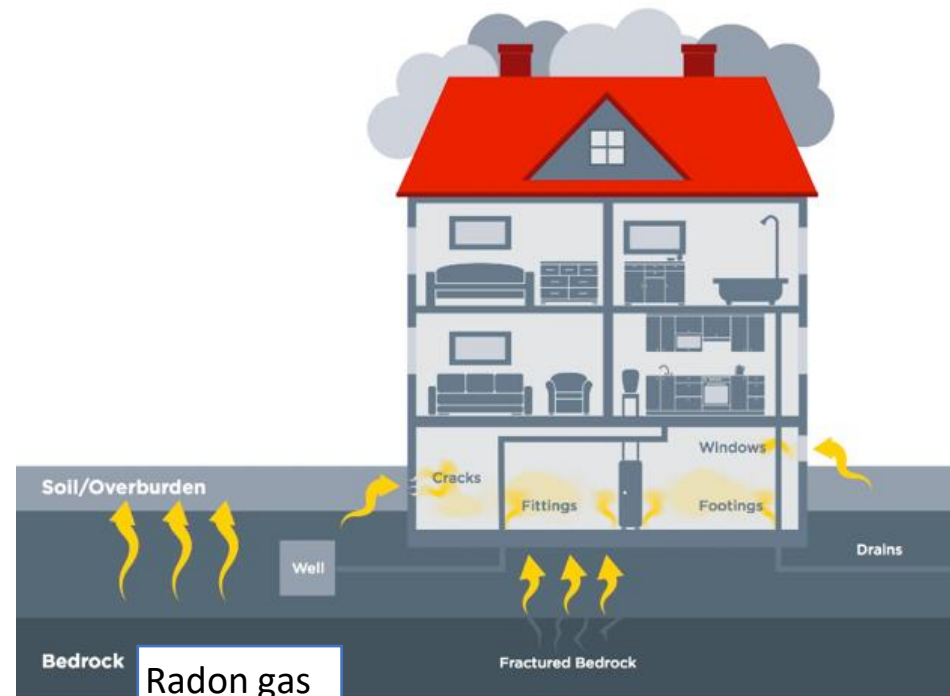
- 2<sup>nd</sup> CAUSE of lung cancer in SMOKERS





# Canadians are exposed to radon mostly from indoor air

- Inside homes and other buildings where people spend more time
- Radon gas enters through
  - cracks in floors or walls
  - sumps or drains
- Levels generally highest in basement and ground contact rooms



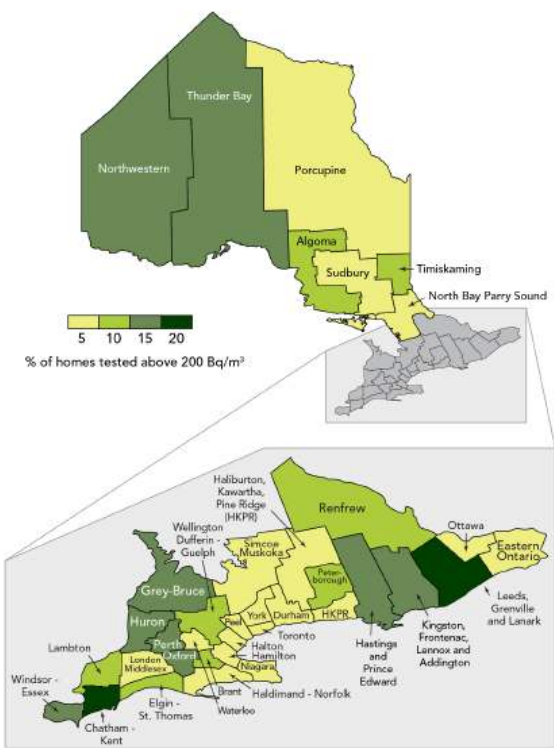
Radon is a radioactive gas that is released when uranium breaks down in the ground. It can infiltrate our homes in the various ways pictured here but mitigation strategies can reduce this exposure in both new and existing structures.



2020-06-16

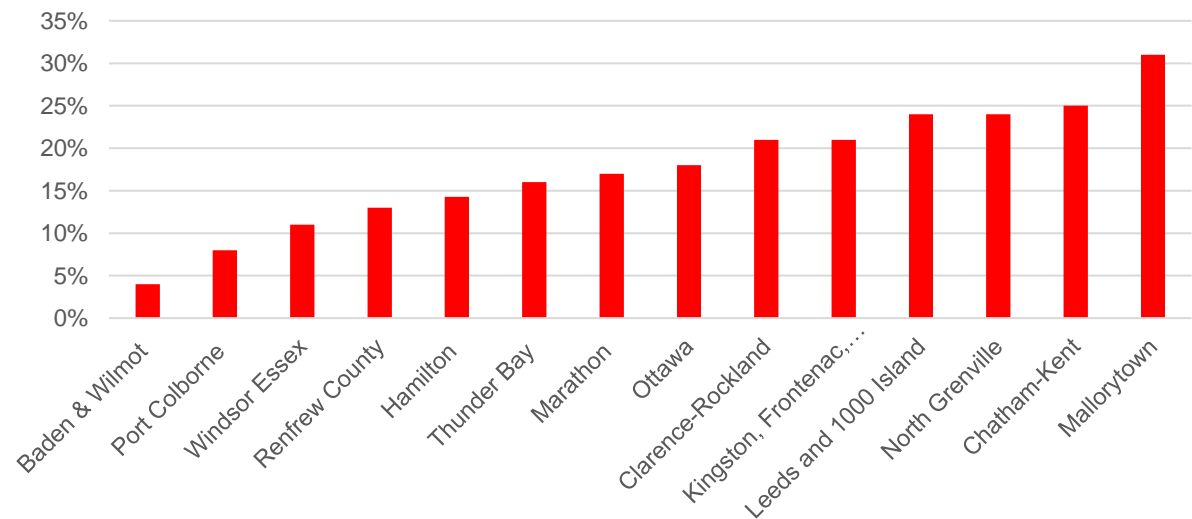
# Recent Radon surveys have been conducted in Ontario

PERCENTAGE OF HOMES THAT TESTED ABOVE THE RADON GUIDELINE IN ONTARIO\*



\* Source: Based on 2011 Cross-Canada Survey of Radon Concentrations in Homes

Percentage of homes with radon levels above 200 Bq/m³



Summary of radon surveys conducted since Health Canada's Cross-Canada Survey in 2010-2011.

## Testing for Radon

The only way to know how much radon is in your home is to **TEST**

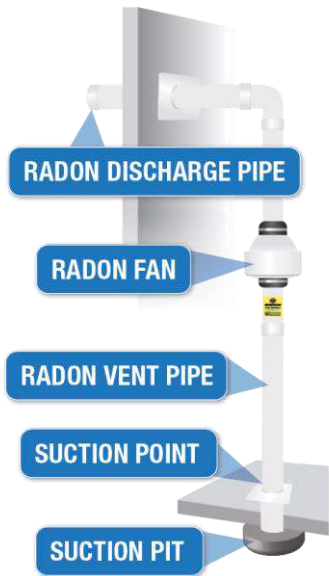


*Radon is easy to **TEST** and easy to **REDUCE***





# Reducing Radon Levels



- A radon mitigation system (Sub-slab depressurization) is the most effective way to reduce radon
- Simple to maintain

**ALL HOMES CAN BE REDUCED.**

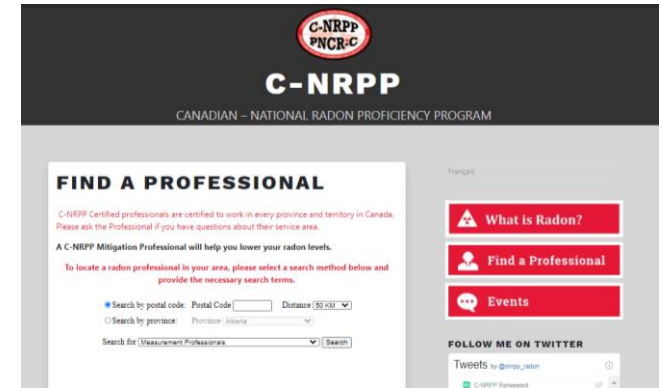


# Canada has a national certification program for radon services

**Radon Measurement Professional** –deploys and retrieves radon detectors and provides a report of the associated measurement results

**Radon Mitigation Professional** –determines the most effective way to reduce radon concentrations within buildings

**Controlling Radon in New Canadian Homes (CRNCH) Installer** – designs and installs radon control systems within new constructed residential structures



Canadian National  
Radon Proficiency  
Program (C-NRPP)



# Radon is included in Building Codes



## **Ontario Building Code: (some Municipalities)**

### **Municipal Radon Option 1:**

- rough-in soil gas pipe, removable cap; labeled
- mandatory radon gas testing

### **Municipal Radon Option 2:**

- soil gas barrier on the foundation walls
- soil gas barrier under the basement floor slab

### **Municipal Radon Option 3**

- soil gas barrier sealed up on the foundation walls
- active sub-slab depressurization system

**Will be harmonizing with National Building Code.**



## Our radon detectors

The tests we use for the 100 Radon Test Kit Challenge are AlphaTrack devices; they are reliable, one-time use and are the most accurate type of testing device.

We follow quality assurance measures to confirm the accuracy of our test devices.



TAKE  
ACTION ON RADON

The logo for "TAKE ACTION ON RADON" is displayed. The word "TAKE" is in black, "ACTION" is in blue, and "ON RADON" is in purple. To the right of the text is a graphic of a black house silhouette with a blue Canadian maple leaf on its roof and a purple radiation symbol integrated into the letter "O" of "RADON".



- Preregistration will open in Fall 2024
- Test kits will be available for pick up over a 1-week period.
- Testing for radon lasts for 91 days or more.
- 1 week collection period to be shipped to the lab in Spring 2025.

**Launching in Fall 2024!**  
**Stay tuned!**





- First addressing questions posted in the Q&A
- To ask/comment on a question
  - use “raise hand” button
  - When asked, press spacebar or unmute to speak
  - If you prefer to type, do so and I will read it out
- Questions we do not get to
  - Answers will be posted to our website and link to resources emailed out







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***“Good science in plain language”<sup>®</sup>***

***Thank you for listening!***

[www.radiationsafety.ca](http://www.radiationsafety.ca)

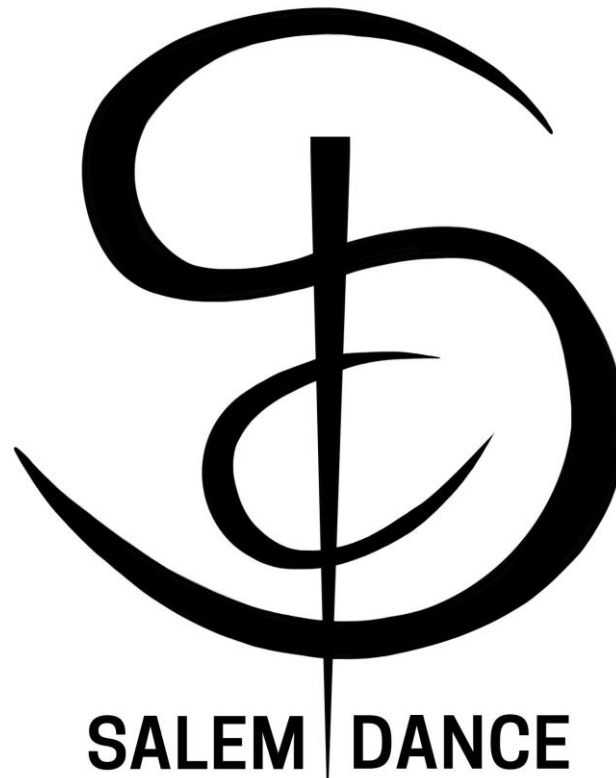
1-800-263-5803

[info@radiationsafety.ca](mailto:info@radiationsafety.ca)



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# Wellness Break



**SALEM DANCE**

COMPANY

<https://www.instagram.com/salemdanceco/>



- [United Steelworkers Union Canada](#)
- [United Steelworkers Union](#)
- [Take Action on Radon](#)
- [CARST](#)
- [C-NRPP](#)
- [Simon Fraser University](#)
- [BC Lung](#)





- [https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/elliottlake/report/Vol1\\_E/ELI\\_Vol1\\_Ch02\\_E.pdf](https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/elliottlake/report/Vol1_E/ELI_Vol1_Ch02_E.pdf)
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/workplace-safety-fight-far-from-over-steelworkers-say-1.2613441>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2449663961>
- <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/elliott-lake>
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/earth-sciences-museum/resources/mining-canada/elliott-lake>
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20211218022921/https://www.thesudburystar.com/2014/03/26/elliott-lake-wildcat-strike-led-to-key-law>



- <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/llt/1900-v1-n1-llt0160/1011330ar.pdf>
- <https://magazine.cim.org/en/voices/the-strike-that-saved-lives/>
- [https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/\\_Public/15/062/15062252.pdf](https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/15/062/15062252.pdf)
- <https://www.occupationalcancer.ca/project/ontario-uranium-miner-cohort/>
- [https://wayback.archive-it.org/16312/20211208093759/http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/elliottlake/report/Vol1\\_E/ELI\\_Vol1\\_Ch02\\_E.pdf](https://wayback.archive-it.org/16312/20211208093759/http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/inquiries/elliottlake/report/Vol1_E/ELI_Vol1_Ch02_E.pdf) (pp. 16 - 20 have a history of Elliot Lake.)
- <https://uwaterloo.ca/earth-sciences-museum/resources/mining-canada/elliott-lake>