

RADON

Radon is a radioactive gas. It comes from the natural decay of uranium that is found in nearly all soils. It typically moves up through the ground to the air above and into your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation. Your home traps radon inside where it can build up. Any home may have radon problems. This means new and old homes, well-sealed and drafty homes, and homes with or without basements.

HOW TO TEST YOUR HOME

You can't see radon, but it's not hard to find out if you have a radon problem in your home. All you need to do is test for radon. Testing is easy and should only take a few minutes of your time.

The amount of radon in the air is measured in "picocuries per liter of air," or "pCi/L." There are many kinds of low-cost "do it yourself" radon test kits you can get through the mail and in some hardware stores and other retail outlets. If you prefer, or if you are buying or selling a home, you can hire a qualified tester to do the testing for you. You should first contact your state radon office about obtaining a list of qualified testers. You can also contact a private radon proficiency program for lists of privately certified radon professionals serving your area. For links and more information, visit www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html.

EPA Recommends the Following Testing Steps:

Step 1.

Take a short-term test. If your result is 4 pCi/L or higher, take a follow-up test (Step 2) to be sure.

Step 2.

Follow up with either a long-term test or a second short-term test:

- ***For a better understanding of your year-round average radon level, take a long-term test.***
- ***If you need results quickly, take a second short-term test.***

The higher your initial short-term test result, the more certain you can be that you should take a short-term rather than a long-term follow up test. If your

first short-term test result is more than twice EPA's 4 pCi/L action level, you should take a second short-term test immediately.

Step 3.

- **If you followed up with a long-term test: Fix your home if your long-term test result is 4 pCi/L or more.**
- **If you followed up with a second short-term test: The higher your short-term results, the more certain you can be that you should fix your home. Consider fixing your home if the average of your first and second test is 4 pCi/L or higher (see also page 7 under Home Sales).**

WHAT YOUR TEST RESULTS MEAN

The average indoor radon level is estimated to be about 1.3 pCi/L, and about 0.4 pCi/L of radon is normally found in the outside air. The U.S. Congress has set a long-term goal that indoor radon levels be no more than outdoor levels. While this goal is not yet technologically achievable in all cases, most homes today *can* be reduced to 2 pCi/L or below.

Sometimes short-term tests are less definitive about whether or not your home is above 4 pCi/L. This can happen when your results are close to 4 pCi/L. For example, if the average of your two short-term test results is 4.1 pCi/L, there is about a 50% chance that your year-round average is somewhat below 4 pCi/L. However, EPA believes that any radon exposure carries some risk—no level of radon is safe. Even radon levels below 4 pCi/L pose some risk, and you can reduce your risk of lung cancer by lowering your radon level.

If your living patterns change and you begin occupying a lower level of your home (such as a basement) you should retest your home on that level.

Even if your test result is below 4 pCi/L, you may want to test again sometime in the future.

Source Contents: US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (Users of Safety Talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations).

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