



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT

RADON

WHAT IS RADON AND WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Radon is an odorless, tasteless, invisible gas. It occurs due to the natural radioactive breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water and then enters the air we breathe.

Radon can be found in all areas of the United States. It can permeate any building, whether an office, school, or home. In the US, it is estimated that 1 out of 15 homes has an elevated radon level.

WHY IS RADON DANGEROUS?

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has estimated that radon causes thousands of deaths each year due to lung cancer. According to the Surgeon General, radon is second only to smoking in causing lung cancer.

HOW DOES RADON GET INTO MY HOME?

Radon generally moves up through the ground to the air above and into your home through cracks and holes in the foundation. Some of the areas that radon most typically can enter a home are:

- Cracks in solid floors
- Construction joints
- Cracks in walls
- Gaps in suspended floors
- Gaps around service pipes
- Cavities inside walls
- Water supply

DO STRUCTURAL CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS TO MY HOME AFFECT THE RADON LEVEL?

These changes may affect the level of radon. When the changes are complete, you may wish to have your home re-tested.

IS RADON A PROBLEM IN ONLY CERTAIN AREAS OF THE COUNTRY?

Radon levels do vary from area to area throughout the country. However, high radon levels have been found in every state.

SHOULD I TEST MY HOME FOR RADON?

Because radon is odorless, tasteless and invisible, the only way to know for sure if it is present is to have your home tested. The EPA and Surgeon General recommend testing all homes below the third floor.

HOW DO I TEST MY HOME FOR RADON?

Radon testing can be easily and quickly handled by a qualified radon professional who can decide what type of testing is best for your home.

Radon is generally tested by means of a radon monitor placed in the lowest livable level of the house, generally the basement.

WHAT DO THE TEST RESULTS MEAN?

Radon is measured in terms of picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). The estimated average radon level for indoor air is 1.3 pCi/L and 0.4 pCi/L for outdoor air.

The current EPA guideline is to have the indoor air measure lower than 4 pCi/L.

CAN A RADON LEVEL BE LOWERED?

Yes, radon levels can be lowered through radon mitigation services. A radon professional can evaluate your home and install a mitigation system.

SHOULD I HAVE MY HOME RE-TESTED AFTER MITIGATION IS DONE?

Having your home retested after radon mitigation is a very important step. It is the only way to determine if the mitigation has worked and what the current level of radon is in your home.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT RADON, TESTING, AND MITIGATION?

The Environmental Protection Agency provides information about radon on their website:
www.epa.gov/radon

RADON RISK IF YOU SMOKE			
<i>(note: if you are a former smoker, your risk may be lower)</i>			
Radon Level	If 1,000 people who smoked were exposed to this level over a lifetime . . .	The risk of cancer from radon exposure compares to . . .	WHAT TO DO: Stop smoking and . . .
20 pCi/L	About 135 people could get lung cancer	100 times the risk of drowning	Fix your home
10 pCi/L	About 71 people could get lung cancer	100 times the risk of dying in a home fire	Fix your home
8 pCi/L	About 57 people could get lung cancer	30 times the risk of dying in a fall	Fix your home
4 pCi/L	About 29 people could get lung cancer	100 times the risk of dying in an airplane crash	Fix your home
2 pCi/L	About 15 people could get lung cancer	2 times the risk of dying in a car crash	Consider fixing between 2 and 4 pCi/L
1.3 pCi/L	About 9 people could get lung cancer	(Average indoor level)	(reducing radon levels below 2 pCi/L is difficult)
0.4 pCi/L	About 3 people could get lung cancer	(Average indoor level)	(reducing radon levels below 2 pCi/L is difficult)
RADON RISK IF YOU'VE NEVER SMOKED			
<i>(note: if you are a former smoker, your risk may be higher)</i>			
Radon Level	If 1,000 people who never smoked were exposed to this level over a lifetime . . .	The risk of cancer from radon exposure compares to . . .	WHAT TO DO:
20 pCi/L	About 8 people could get lung cancer	The risk of being killed in a violent crime	Fix your home
10 pCi/L	About 4 people could get lung cancer	20 times the risk of dying in a home fire	Fix your home
8 pCi/L	About 3 people could get lung cancer	10 times the risk of dying in an airplane crash	Fix your home
4 pCi/L	About 2 people could get lung cancer	The risk of drowning	Fix your home
2 pCi/L	About 1 person could get lung cancer	The risk of dying in a home fire	Consider fixing between 2 and 4 pCi/L
1.3 pCi/L	Less than 1 person could get lung cancer	(Average indoor level)	(reducing radon levels below 2 pCi/L is difficult)
0.4 pCi/L	Less than 1 person could get lung cancer	(Average indoor level)	(reducing radon levels below 2 pCi/L is difficult)

		
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