



Get the Facts About Radon

WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a tasteless, odorless, colorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas. It comes from the breakdown of uranium in rocks and soil.

Radon enters the home through hollow block walls, cracks in the foundation floor and walls, and openings around floor drains, pipes, and sump holes.

Did you know...

- After smoking cigarettes, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and is estimated to cause approximately 21,000 deaths in the United States annually.
- An estimated 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes have radon levels greater than the EPA guideline of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L).

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR HOME HAS HIGH RADON LEVELS?

You and your family are most likely to get the greatest exposure to radon at home. The only way to know the radon level in your home is to test. Testing is easy and inexpensive. You may perform the test yourself using a radon test device.

Radon test devices can be purchased at a home center or from a Pennsylvania-certified Laboratory. You may also hire a Pennsylvania-certified tester to perform the test.

There are two types of radon tests:

- **Short-Term Test:** These tests are placed for two to seven days and provide a quick screening result. Closed building conditions must be maintained during these tests.
- **Long-Term Test:** These tests are placed from three to twelve months and provide a long-term average of the home's radon level. Closed building conditions are not required for these tests.

The cost of a test is about \$20 to \$30 for a do-it-yourself test and about \$90 to \$120 for a certified tester to test the home.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Pennsylvania law requires anyone (except the owner/occupant of the building) performing radon testing, mitigation, or laboratory analysis to be certified by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). To verify the certification, call 800-23-RADON or visit www.dep.pa.gov/radon and look for "Radon Services Directory."

WHAT DO YOUR TEST RESULTS MEAN?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that if your initial radon test result shows a level of 4 pCi/L or higher, you should confirm the result with a follow-up test. For homes with radon levels of 4 pCi/L or higher, the EPA recommends that you have a radon mitigation system installed to lower the radon levels.



When selling a home, the seller must disclose any known radon test results to the buyer.

HOW CAN YOU REDUCE RADON LEVELS?

Radon levels can be reduced by installing a radon mitigation system. The most common type of system uses an arrangement of plastic pipes and a fan to vent the radon gas to the outside air. The typical cost of a radon mitigation system ranges from \$500 to \$2,000 (with an average of about \$1,000).

Reducing Radon Levels in New Construction

- Be sure to consider building with radon-resistant new construction techniques. These techniques can be effective

in preventing radon entry, and installing these features at the time of construction is easier and less expensive than retrofitting an existing home.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- DEP radon website: www.dep.pa.gov/radon.
- Radon Toll Free Line: 800-23-RADON
- EPA radon website: www.epa.gov/radon
- EPA Radon Hotline: 800-SOS-RADON

For additional information, the following documents are available free of charge from DEP:

- Pennsylvania's Home Buyers' and Sellers' Guide to Radon
- Consumer Guide to Radon Reduction
- Pennsylvania Resident's Guide to Radon

Contact Women for a Healthy Environment

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WomenForAHealthyEnvironment.org



Women for a Healthy Environment (WHE) is a non-profit environmental health organization that empowers underserved communities to build resilience, promote equity, and safeguard children from environmental health hazards.