

LAND

Fact Sheet | January 2008

Basic Radon Facts

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas



Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil, and water from the natural decay of uranium. While levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, radon can accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. You can't see, smell, or taste it,

but an elevated radon level in your home may be affecting the health of your family.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the country each year. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. If you smoke and your home has radon, your risk of lung cancer can be higher.

Radon is found all over the United States

Radon has been found in elevated levels in homes in every state. No area of the country is free from risk. Indeed, two homes right next to each other can have vastly different radon levels. Just because your neighbor's house does not have an elevated level of radon does not mean that your house will have a low radon level. Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), a measurement of radioactivity. EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that homes

with radon levels at 4 pCi/L or higher should be fixed. The only way to know if your home is under the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L is to test. High levels of radon in homes usually come from the surrounding soil. Radon gas enters through cracks and openings—such as sump pump lids and plumbing features—on the lower levels of your home. Hot spots include basements, first-floor rooms, and garages, but radon can be found anywhere in your house.

You should test for radon

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all homes in the U.S. be tested for radon. Testing your home

for radon is easy to do. If your home has a radon problem, you can take steps to fix it to protect yourself and your family.

Testing for Radon is Easy

- To obtain an easy-to-use radon test kit, you can:
- Contact DEQ State Environmental Laboratory at 405-702-1152 to purchase a radon test kit for \$25.00.
- Purchase a test kit from your local home improvement or hardware store.
- Hire a qualified radon tester to do a test for you. A list of certified testers can be found at www.deq.state.ok.us/radon



Basic Radon Facts Continued



You can find out if your home has an elevated radon level by conducting a simple test. It's as easy as opening a package, placing a radon detector in a designated area, and, after a set number of days, sending the detector back to a lab for analysis. The lab will then inform you of your radon test results.

You can fix a radon problem

The cost of making repairs to reduce the radon level depends on several factors, including how your home was built. Most homes can be fixed for about the same cost as other common home repairs, like painting or having a new hot water heater installed. The average cost for a contractor to mitigate radon levels in a home is about \$1,200, although costs can range from \$800 to approximately \$2,500. A list of certified mitigators can be found at www.deq.state.ok/radon.

New homes can be built with radon-resistant features

Radon-resistant construction methods can be effective in reducing radon entry. When used properly, these simple and cost-effective techniques can help reduce the accumulation of radon gas in homes.

Every new home should be tested after occupancy, even if it was built using radon-resistant construction methods. If radon levels at or above EPA's action level of 4 pCi/L are detected, it is easier and less expensive to reduce radon levels in homes that have been built with radon-resistant construction techniques.



For more information

- Please contact Keisha Cornelius or Michelle Varbel at 405-702-5100.
- To order test kits call 405-702-1152



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