

Michigan Environmental Health Association Fact Sheet

An Organization Of Professionals Dedicated To The Improvement Of Health Through The Management Of The Environment

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RADON

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What is radon?

- Radon is a gas.
- It is naturally occurring.
- It cannot be seen or smelled.
- It can enter buildings from the soil under the buildings.

Why is radon a concern?

- Radon decays into radioactive particles.
- Radioactive particles attach to airborne dust particles.
- These particles are easily inhaled and deposited in lungs.
- Sensitive lung tissue can be damaged.

Radon is a gas that causes lung cancer.

- Radioactive particles in the lungs can kill or damage cells, leading to increased potential for lung cancer.
- Amount and length of exposure to radon increases the risk of lung cancer.

How do I know if my home has radon?

- **THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW IS TO TEST.**
- Testing is inexpensive and easy.
- You can purchase short-term and long-term test kits from your local health department

How is radon measured?

- Radon gas is measured in 'picocuries per liter of air' or 'pCi/L.'
- The EPA action limit (when you should fix your home) is 4 pCi/L.

Radon risk:

- Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, causing approximately 15,000 deaths each year.
- EPA ranks radon in the top 4 environmental risks to the public.

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Radon Concentration (pCi/L)	Increased cancer risk after 30 years of exposure**
4	14%
8	26%
12	42%
16	56%
20	70%

**Compared to outside radon levels, average 1.3

What do I do if my home has a radon level greater than 4 pCi/L?

- Consider installing a 'radon mitigation system,' venting air from under the foundation to the outside.
- There are many contractors in Michigan that are certified to do this work.
- A list can be obtained from the state radon office: 1-800-RADON-GAS, or by looking online at:
 - <http://www.radongas.org>
 - <http://www.nrsb.org>

Radon Resistant New Construction:

- A radon mitigation system can be installed during construction of a new home.
- These systems are easier and cheaper to install during construction.
- These systems are required by some building codes in areas prone to high radon levels

If I test my home, do I have to disclose the results in a property transfer?

- Yes, The Michigan Real Estate Disclosure Act of 1993 states that when a house seller is aware of an environmental hazard (radon, asbestos, lead, etc.), the results must be recorded on the seller's disclosure statement. Failure to disclose these hazards could result in cancellation of the real estate contract.
- A radon problem is fixable. It should not be a deterrent to buying or selling a home.

Additional Resources:

- DEQ: Drinking Water & Radiological Protection Division—Radon Program
1-800 RADON GAS.
- http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3310_4104_4196---,00.html
- US EPA: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/radon/index.html>

References

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