

Testing For Radon Gas

With the rise in awareness of radon gas and its impact on our personal health, testing for radon has become a common topic in real estate transactions. Current home and building owners want to make sure they're moving into a home that is safe from elevated radon levels.

When it comes to testing for radon, there are some important questions that come up.

- Should I test for radon? What if none of my neighbors have high radon levels in their homes?
- When should I test my home for radon?
- Can I perform the test myself, or should I hire a professional?
- What do I do if my test results are high? How much is that going to cost me?

We'll address all of those concerns. If you have a question that goes unanswered, or you're looking to hire a professional to give you accurate and reliable results, give us a call.

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"Giving You A Better Look"



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Radon Test In Progress!

DO NOT DISTURB THE TESTING DEVICE! Maintain closed building conditions, keep windows and exterior doors closed except for normal entry and exit. **Do not operate dehumidifiers.** Please do not operate fans or machines that will bring in air from outdoors.

Operate the heat and air conditioning normally and continue with your daily routine. The occupant will be responsible for repairs or replacement of the device if it has been damaged.

More information about Radon:



<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-05/documents/hmbuygud.pdf>



https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/documents/2012_a_citizens_guide_to_radon.pdf



RADON



WHAT IS RADON?

When natural uranium inside the earth decays, it eventually produces radon — a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that seeps up through the rock and soil in the ground. Radon can be found virtually anywhere, in different concentrations, because most rocks contain trace amounts of uranium.



Radon began to be recognized as a problem in the 1970s and 80s. The US government put considerable resources behind the research, awareness, and mitigation efforts with the Indoor Radon Abatement Act of 1988. In the time since, several major health organizations including the EPA, CDC, and WHO have recognized radon as a serious health risk. Estimated to be responsible for 20,000 deaths in the US each year, the EPA states that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer behind smoking.

How Does Radon Get Into My Home?

Your home can slowly take in radon from the surrounding soil due to differences in air pressure. The noxious gas can enter the home through pores and cracks in the foundation, exposed soil, construction joints, utility access points, and so on. Radon can affect any home, including those without basements. New homes should be tested once work is completed. If the radon level is high on a new construction, it may be covered under warranty. Speak to your builder for more information.

Should I Test for Radon?

Any home has the potential for hazardous levels of radon. The EPA and U.S. Surgeon General recommend testing all homes. Radon test results from other houses in the region, or even in the same neighborhood, are not a good indicator of the radon levels in your home. Several factors can contribute to high radon levels, so one house may have very different test results than their next door neighbor.

More home buyers, owners, and renters are asking about radon levels. Because these real estate transactions tend to happen quickly, there often isn't much time to perform a radon test — which requires at least 48 hours. If you're selling or renting your property, then your best bet is to test for radon now and save the results to speed up the transaction. This can also be a great selling point. For buyers, performing the test before you buy could save a significant amount of money down the road.

Who Can Conduct A Radon Test?

In the State of New York, anyone can test for radon. There are no training or license requirements. However, without proper training your results may be very inaccurate. For example, windows and exterior doors must remain closed except for normal entry and exit. You should not operate dehumidifiers, fans, or machines that will bring in air from the outside, and heating or A/C should be run normally. Testing should be performed at the lowest level to be used as a living space. If proper procedures are not followed, then your radon test results could be misleading.

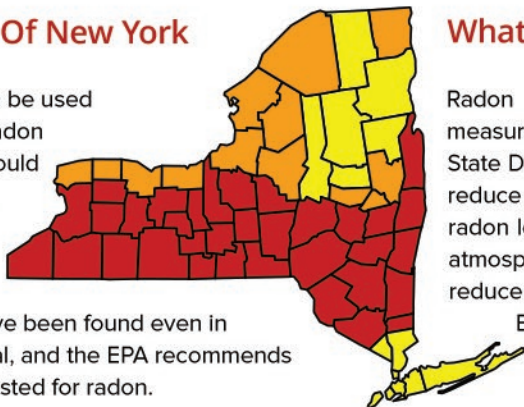
The testing equipment also has an important impact on your radon test. Passive testing equipment like charcoal canisters are unreliable in the hands of someone without proper training. No formal training is required to use them, and they are often placed incorrectly. These devices are also susceptible to fraud, and must be sent to a lab to be analyzed. In real estate transactions, time is often limited. On the other hand, active monitoring devices, such as our units from Sun Nuclear, offer a detailed hour-by-hour record over the course of the test. These include details about temperature and atmospheric pressure, which can help explain unusual readings due to a rainstorm, heating or A/C systems operating, and many other events. Our units are also equipped with anti-tamper features to detect unusual activity around the device or detect if someone were to open all of the windows.

For these reasons, we highly recommend that you hire a radon testing professional. We carry a certification from the New York State Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) and can help you understand the radon test results, including any irregularities in the radon levels.

Radon Potential Map For The State Of New York

This map is not intended to be used as a substitute for indoor radon testing, and cannot and should not be used to estimate or predict the indoor radon concentrations of an individual building.

Harmful levels of radon have been found even in areas of low radon potential, and the EPA recommends that all homes should be tested for radon.



What Do Your Radon Test Results Mean?

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter (pCi/L), a measurement of radioactive decay. The EPA and the New York State Department of Health both recommend taking action to reduce radon in your home at or above 4.0 pCi/L. Note that radon levels can fluctuate based on several factors including atmospheric pressure and rainfall. A homeowner can usually reduce radon levels well below 4.0 pCi/L. For that reason, the EPA recommends that you fix your home if the radon levels exceed 2.0 pCi/L to improve safety even further. The good news is that a high level of radon is

a very fixable problem. A radon mitigation system can often lower radon levels to those found naturally in the air above ground, which is considered very safe. A typical radon mitigation system works by drawing in air from the soil beneath your home and venting it out near the roof. The cost of such a system varies but is typically between \$800 and \$2400. That's a small price to pay for safety, and if you're selling your house it can be an attractive selling point.