IOWA AIR Public Health Coalition

The Iowa A.I.R. Coalition educates and empowers all citizens in their desire to have a healthy and safe indoor environment by consistently providing prevention, promotion, and protection activities across Iowa.

Radon Facts:

*Radon is a radioactive gas that is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. It originates in the soil from the natural decay of uranium that exists in or below most soils and enters the home through cracks, around pipes or conduit openings, through sump pumps and drain tiles, between the floor and wall joints in a basement, and even from negative pressure drawing the gas into the home.

The only way to know if your home has radon is to test for it.

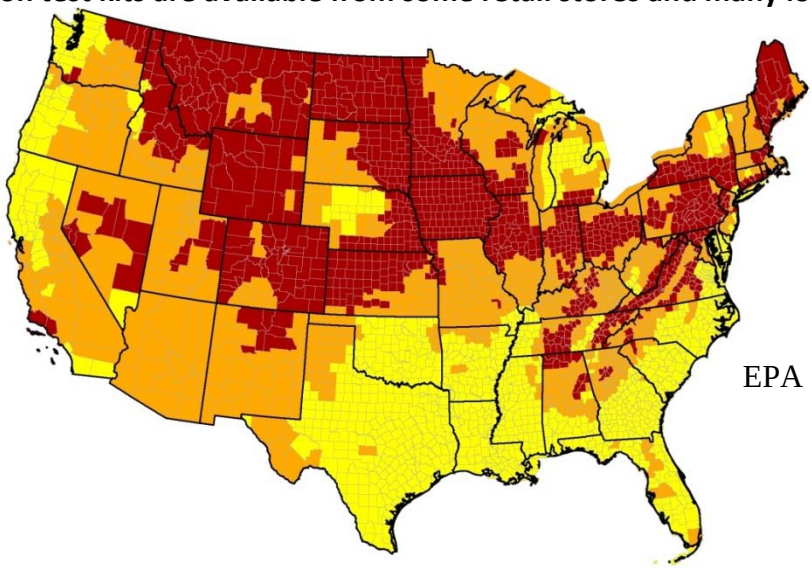
***In the United States, radon is the first leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, and the second leading cause of lung cancer overall.**

***The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon causes approximately 21,000 deaths per year nationally, most of these are preventable.**

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set a recommended **radon action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L)**. The EPA recommends that all Iowa homes be tested for radon and homes over 4 pCi/L be fixed.

***Iowa has the highest percentage of homes above 4 pCi/L in the United States.**

***Radon test kits are available from some retail stores and many local Health departments.**



EPA Zone Map

	Zone 1 counties have a predicted average indoor radon screening level greater than 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter) **(red zones)**	**Highest Potential**
	Zone 2 counties have a predicted average indoor radon screening level between 2 and 4 pCi/L **(orange zones)**	**Moderate Potential**
	Zone 3 counties have a predicted average indoor radon screening level less than 2 pCi/L **(yellow zones)**	**Low Potential**

Contact your local public health office to see if kits are available by calling

Kits also available @
www.iowaaircoalition.org
www.healthhouse.org
www.lchh.org

Linn County Public Health
319-892-6000

American Lung Association of the Upper Midwest
1-800-383-5992

How do you test for Radon?

EPA Recommends the Following Testing Steps according to *A Citizen's Guide to Radon*:

Step 1. Take a short-term test. If your result is 4 pCi/L or higher take a follow-up test (Step 2) to be sure.

Step 2. Follow up with either a long-term test or a second short-term test:

- For a better understanding of your year-round average radon level, take a long-term test.
- If you need results quickly, take a second short-term test.

The higher your initial short-term test result, the more certain you can be that you should take a short-term rather than a long-term follow up test. If your first short-term test result is more than twice EPA's 4 pCi/L action level, you should take a second short-term test immediately.

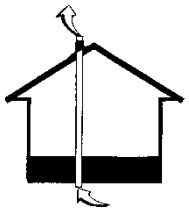
Step 3. If you followed up with a long-term test: Fix your home if your long-term test result is 4 pCi/L or more. If you followed up with a second short-term test: The higher your short-term results, the more certain you can be that you should fix your home. Consider fixing your home if the average of your first and second test is 4 pCi/L or higher.

Step 4. If the radon test result is lower than 4 pCi/L, continue to monitor by retesting every 2 years or if building conditions change.

Note: A single short-term test should not be used as a basis to mitigate your home, radon levels may fluctuate over the short-term time period you tested. Homes can be tested at anytime of the year, but radon levels fluctuate during the year. If a summer test shows low levels, the house should be retested in cold weather as well.

How do you lower Radon Levels?

Most radon problems can be corrected with a mitigation system costing between $800 and $2,000 installed by a certified contractor. Occasionally lower radon levels can be fixed using less expensive techniques such as sealing sump pits and other openings in the foundation. Always follow up with a test kit to make sure radon levels have been reduced.



A typical radon mitigation system is a 3"- 4" PVC pipe extending from a hole in the basement floor through the roof. A permanent fan supplies suction through the pipe, drawing radon from beneath the slab and exhausting it outside above the eaves level of the house.

Iowa law requires professionals who install radon mitigation systems to be certified by the Iowa Department of Public Health. The list is available by calling the IDPH hotline 1-800-383-5992 or visiting the IDPH website at: http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp

Knowledgeable homeowners may take corrective action to reduce radon levels in their own homes.

Other Radon Information:

www.iowaaircoalition.org **http://www.lchh.org** **http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp**

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/healthy_homes.asp **http://www.epa.gov/radon**