

Homeowners/Buyers – FAQs

Q. Why should I test for radon?

A. Radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring, inert radioactive gas that comes from the decay of radium is the only gaseous element of the long, uranium-238 radioactive decay chain. Uranium and radium are commonly found in soil and rocks around the world. People can be exposed to radon primarily from breathing radon-laden air that enters through cracks and gaps in the building's foundation. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Academy of Sciences and the Center for Disease Control, indoor radon exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, responsible for more than 20,000 U.S. lung cancer deaths each year. When you breathe in radon, radioactive particles from radon gas can get trapped in your lungs, where they can damage DNA as they release alpha radiation. The only way to know your home or building contains dangerous radon levels is to have a test performed.

Q. My home doesn't have a basement; does it need to be tested?

A. Elevated radon has been found in buildings with all foundation types and in every county in the country. All homes should be tested regardless of geographic location or foundation type.

Q. How much radon is too much?

A. Radon is a radioactive gas and there is no safe level. Consumers should be aware that U.S. EPA's estimate of 21,000 annual deaths from radon induced lung cancer in the U.S. was based on an average level of 1.3 picocuries per liter of air. The EPA Action Level of 4 picocuries/per liter of air (pCi/L) was based on the achievability of early radon mitigation technology from three decades ago. Annual exposure to 4 pCi/l is the equivalent of 200

chest x-rays per year. The World Health Organization recommends indoor radon should not exceed 100 Bq/m³ (Becquerel per cubic meter) which equates to 2.7 pCi/L. Lung cancer risk rises 16% per 2.7 pCi/L increase in radon exposure.

Q. What if my home tests high?

A. Elevated radon concentrations can easily be reduced by an NRPP Certified, or state licensed, if applicable, radon mitigator.

Q. If I am buying a home, what do I need to know about radon?

A. Be sure to have a radon test performed by an **NRPP Certified Radon Tester** during the home inspection period. If the test results are elevated, you can request the seller to have it mitigated prior to closing. Since most radon mitigations systems can be installed in one day or less so there is usually no reason to delay the closing. While a seller and buyer can always negotiate the installation costs, it is common for the seller to pay for the system installation. But, since the seller is moving out, they are not often concerned about the qualifications of the contractor or the quality of the work they perform. It is reasonable to expect they will take the lowest bid as long as it includes a guarantee that the post-mitigation test will be below EPA's 4 pCi/L Action Level.

Q. If the seller is paying for the radon mitigation, what can I do to ensure the contractor installs a system that meets ANSI-AARST Mitigation Standards?

A. Ask your agent to stipulate in your agreement that the contractor be NRPP certified, that the system be installed according to ANSI-AARST Soil Gas Mitigation Standards, that the post-mitigation test be performed by the same NRPP certified tester who performed the original test, and that the tester inspects the system to ensure compliance using the **AARST Radon Mitigation Inspection Checklist**.

Q. I am purchasing a new home and the builder says it has a radon system built in.