

# RADON

## WHAT IS RADON?

### [Home Buyer / Seller Video](#)

Radon is a radioactive gas that has been found in homes all over the U.S. It comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water and gets into the air you breathe. Radon typically moves up through the ground to the air above and into your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation. Your home can trap radon inside.

Any home can have a radon problem. This means new and old homes, well-sealed and drafty homes, and homes with or without basements. In fact, you and your family are most likely to get your greatest radiation exposure at home. That is where you spend most of your time.

Nearly 1 out of every 15 homes in the U.S. is estimated to have elevated radon levels. Elevated levels of radon gas have been found in homes in your state. Contact your state radon office for information about radon in your area.

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### **IF YOU ARE SELLING A HOME, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO ?**

#### **If your home has already been tested radon....**

If you are thinking of selling your home and you have already tested your home for radon, provide your test results to the buyer.

No matter what kind of test you took, a potential buyer may ask for a new test especially if:

- You have renovated or altered your home since you tested;
- The buyer plans to live in a lower level of the house than you do, such as a basement which is suitable for occupancy but is not currently lived in;
- Or, your State requires disclosure of Radon information to buyers.

### **If the home has not yet been tested for radon....**

Have a test taken as soon as possible. If you can, test your home before putting it on the market because this may save time during real estate transactions. You should test in the lowest level of the home which is suitable for occupancy. **This means testing in the lowest level that you currently live in or a lower level not currently used, but which a buyer could use for a living space without renovations.** The result of the radon test is important information about your home's radon level that potential buyers may want to know.]

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### **IF YOU ARE BUYING A HOME, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO ... ?**

#### **If the home has already been tested for radon.....**

If you are thinking of buying a home, you may either decide to accept the test results from the seller, ask the seller to do another test, or you may ask for a new test to be conducted by an EPA listed or state-certified radon tester ([see our inspector listing](#)).

If you plan to use the seller's test, find out as soon as possible from the seller:

- the results of the previous test; and
- who conducted the previous test: the homeowner, a radon professional or some other person; and
- where in the home the previous test was taken, especially if you may plan to live in a lower level of the home. For example, the test may have been taken on the first floor; **however, you may want to live in a basement which is not currently lived in but which is suitable for occupancy without renovation.**
- what, if any, structural changes or alterations have been made to the house since the test was done. Such changes might affect radon levels.

If you decide that a new test is needed, you should discuss it with the seller as soon as possible. If you decide to use an EPA listed of/or state-certified radon tester, [check our inspector listing](#) or contact your state radon office for a list of radon testing companies.

## If the home has not yet been tested for radon....

Make sure that a radon test is done as soon as possible. You should consider including provisions in the contract specifying who should conduct the test, what type of test to do, when to do the test, and how the seller and the buyer will share the test results, test costs and, if necessary, when radon mitigation measures should be taken and who should pay for them. Make sure that the test is done in the lowest level of the home suitable for occupancy. **This means the lowest level that you are going to use as living space which is finished or does not require renovations prior to use.** A state or local radon official or an EPA-listed or state-certified radon tester can help you make some of these decisions ([see our inspector listing](#))

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## IF YOU ARE BUYING A NEWLY BUILT HOME, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO... ?

New homes can be built with radon-resistant features that minimize radon entry and allow easier fixing of radon problems that could occur later. These features cost less if installed during construction than if added to an existing home. In most new homes, use of radon-resistant features will keep radon levels to below 2pCi/L.

Builders can incorporate radon-resistant features into the homes they build. Some states, counties and local jurisdictions may adopt radon-resistant construction features in their building codes, which builders must then follow. Radon-resistant construction standards can be applied depending on the radon potential in a particular area. Many builders already use radon resistant building features.

New home buyers should ask if radon-resistant construction techniques have been built into the new home they are considering for purchase. Buyers should also ask whether information about radon is available. For custom-built homes, the buyer should discuss radon resistant features with the builder, including the cost. Occupants of newly constructed homes should have their homes tested for radon. A long term test will provide a reading that is more representative of the home's year round average radon level. However, short-term tests may be used to determine if elevated radon levels exists.

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## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU FIND A HIGH RADON LEVEL ... ?

EPA recommends that you take action to reduce your home's indoor levels if your radon test results is 4pCi/L or higher. It is preferable to correct a radon problem before placing your home on the market because then you have more time to address a radon problem. If elevated levels are found during the real estate transaction, the buyer and seller should discuss the timing and costs of the radon reduction, as with any other aspect of the home purchase and sale.

The cost of making repairs to reduce radon depends on how you home was built and other factors. Most homes can be fixed for about the same costs as other common home repairs, like painting or having a new hot water heater installed. The average cost for a contractor to lower radon levels in a home is about \$1200, although this can range form \$500 to about \$2500.