



## **RADON**

### **EPA Consumer s Guides to Radon**

Radon is a cancer-causing radioactive gas which is naturally produced by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water. Air pressure inside your home is usually lower than pressure in the soil around the foundation. Because of this difference in pressure, your house acts like a vacuum, drawing radon in through foundation cracks and other openings. Radon may also be present in well water and can be released into the air in your home when water is used for showering and other household uses.

Radon is completely invisible to sight, smell or taste, and has been found in every state of the United States. The Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, behind only cigarette smoking. As with asbestos, the combination of radon and cigarette smoking is more than twice as deadly as either individually, and the health effects are directly related to the amount and length of exposure to it. It is therefore important that you test your home, school, commercial or institutional building for the presence of radon.

Testing for radon and designing a reduction system is not necessarily difficult or expensive. The kind of test and management system are determined by the size of your building and type of foundation.

### **Common Myths About RADON**

#### **1. Scientists aren t sure radon really is a problem**

**Fact:** Although some scientists dispute the precise number of Radon deaths, virtually all scientists and major health authorities (like the Centers for Disease Control and the American Lung Association) agree with estimates that Radon causes thousands of preventable lung cancer deaths every year.

#### **2. Radon testing is difficult, time-consuming and expensive.**

**Fact:** Radon testing is inexpensive and easy -- it should only take a little of your time.

#### **3. Homes with Radon problems can be fixed.**

**Fact:** There are simple solutions to Radon problems in homes. Thousands of home-owners have already fixed Radon problems in their homes. Radon levels can be readily lowered for about \$500 to \$2500.

#### **4. Radon only affects certain kinds of homes.**

**Fact:** House construction can affect Radon levels. However, Radon can be a problem in old homes, new homes, drafty homes, insulated homes, homes without basements -- homes of all types.

**5. Radon is only a problem in certain parts of the country.**

**Fact:** High Radon levels have been found in every state. Radon problems do vary from area to area, but the only way to know your Radon level is to test.

**6. A neighbor's test result is a good indication of whether your home has a problem.**

**Fact:** It's not. Radon levels vary from home to home. The only way to know if your home has a Radon problem is to test.

**7. Everyone should test their water for Radon.**

**Fact:** While Radon gets into some homes through the water, you should test the air in your home for Radon first. If you find high levels and have a well, test your water too.

**8. It's difficult to sell homes where Radon problems have been discovered.**

**Fact:** Where Radon problems have been fixed, home sales have not been blocked or frustrated. The added protection is sometimes a good selling point.

**9. I've lived in my home for so long, it doesn't make sense to take action now.**

**Fact:** You can reduce your risk of lung cancer when you reduce Radon levels, even if you've lived with a Radon problem for a long time.