

DEP Highlights National Radon Action Month, Provides Free Radon Test Kits

Testing for radon is one of the easiest actions Pennsylvanians can take to keep their homes safe and families healthy

Harrisburg, PA – January is National Radon Action Month, marking a time of increased outreach and public awareness for this serious health hazard.

Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that occurs naturally through the breakdown of uranium in soil and rocks. It can seep into homes through cracks in basements and foundations, then build up inside to concentrations many times the recommended level.

“Radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer after smoking in the United States, and is a serious concern within the Commonwealth,” said **Jessica Shirley, Interim Acting Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**. “The Department of Environmental Protection remains committed to working with home builders, school districts, realtors and other Pennsylvania departments to address radon issues and keeping all Pennsylvanians safe.”

Radon is responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year in the U.S., according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and about 40 percent of Pennsylvania homes have radon levels above the EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/L (picocuries per liter). While radon problems may be more common in some regions, there is potential for any home to have high radon levels.

Pennsylvania is particularly prone to elevated radon levels, and the only way homeowners can know for certain if they have a radon problem is to test their home. DEP recommends that all homes, public and private buildings get tested. The best time to test is during the colder months, when homes and buildings are closed and radon is most likely to be trapped and build up to higher levels.

DEP and the American Lung Association are working together to provide radon test kits to Pennsylvania residents who have not yet tested their homes for this dangerous gas. [Free radon test kits](#) are available throughout the Commonwealth from the American Lung Association, while supplies last. Test kits are funded through a grant from DEP and the EPA State Indoor Radon Grant Program.

“Radon in homes is more common than many people think. Exposure to radon shouldn’t be taken lightly because it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States,” said **Kevin M. Stewart, Director of Environmental Health for the American Lung Association**. “The good news is that it is easy to test for radon. Do-it-yourself test kits are simple to use and inexpensive.”

Radon test kits are also available at many home improvement and hardware stores, as well as from Pennsylvania-certified radon laboratories. Radon test kits typically cost approximately \$20-\$30. Completed test kits are sent to a Pennsylvania-certified lab where the sample is analyzed, and the results are sent to the home or building owner. Homeowners are also able to hire a state-certified radon testing company to do the testing for them. The public is encouraged to call DEP’s Radon Division at 717-783-3594, or the Radon Hotline at 800-237-2366, for help with interpretation of their test results and what follow-up action may be necessary.

Permanent radon mitigation systems typically cost between \$800 and \$1,200 and require minimal maintenance. A list of state-certified radon contractors, labs, and testers is available on DEP’s [website](#). The list is also available by calling 1-800-23-RADON

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s [website](#), follow DEP on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#).