

Kansas Radon Program
Engineering Extension
Kansas State University
800-693-5343
<http://radon.oznet.ksu.edu>

Radon Testing Options for Homeowners

Protect your family... test your home

Now that a do-it-yourself radon test is economical, easy to use, reliable, and readily available, homeowners should measure radon levels in their homes.

A neighbor's reading cannot substitute for a reading in your home. Only testing can provide you with a level of confidence about the potential radon exposure you face.

The amount of radon in the air is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/l). Approximately 0.4 to 0.6 pCi/l is normally found in outdoor air. The national estimated indoor average is about 1.3 Ci/l. EPA has set 4 pCi/l as the maximum average recommended indoor radon concentration. With the technology available today, most homes with high readings can be reduced to below 4 pCi/l. Many can be reduced to below 2 pCi/l.

Your testing process should begin with a short-term test of two to seven days. If your result is over 4 pCi/l, follow up with either a second short-term test, or a long-term test.

Long-term tests give a better understanding of average radon levels. Short-term tests get results quickly. If either the average result of the two short-term tests or the result of a long-term test is over 4 pCi/l, you should consider taking steps to reduce radon levels.



Kansas Radon Program

Engineering Extension • Kansas State University

There may be trained experts in your area who can test for you. Make certain you hire a firm or individual that is a radon professional measurement specialist listed in a National Radon Measurement Proficiency program, such as National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) (www.neha.org) or National Radon Safety Board (NRSB) (www.nrsb.org). Lists of these firms and suppliers of test kits are available from the above listed Web sites or from the Kansas Radon Program Coordinator at 1-800-693-5343.

Homeowners may purchase radon testing kits from local retail outlets, county health departments, extension offices, or by phone or mail. Prices range from \$5 to \$35.

Make certain you hire a firm or individual that is a radon professional measurement specialist listed in a National Radon Measurement Proficiency program, such as National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) (www.neha.org) or National Radon Safety Board (NRSB) (www.nrsb.org).

Test your home!

Radon Testing Options for Homeowners

“The best approach you can take as a homeowner is to conduct a short-term screening...”

Surgeon General of the United States Health Advisory:

“Indoor radon gas is a national health problem. Radon causes thousands of deaths each year. Millions of homes have elevated radon levels. Most homes should be tested for radon. When elevated levels are confirmed, the problem should be corrected.”

Any radon detector you purchase must come with instructions on use, specifically the period of time the device should be exposed. The most popular, commercially available detectors are the charcoal canister and the alpha track detector.

Charcoal canisters are used for making short-term, average radon measurements over two to seven days. Alpha track detectors measure average radon levels for periods of three to 12 months.

Testing your home for radon will not disrupt your daily routine.

However, for the 12 hours before and throughout a short-term test, keep doors and windows closed as much as possible. During a long-term test, you can operate the home normally. Locate test kits where you spend the most time on the lowest livable level of the home.

Testing the basement, and first and second floors at the same time can help you relate radon levels to where you spend the most time.

Avoid testing in kitchens, baths, drafts, heat and high humidity. Living rooms or bedrooms are good spots, especially if they are in basements. Do not test in crawl spaces, sumps, or on the floor.

After exposure, canisters and detectors should be sealed and immediately returned to the laboratory for analysis to determine the radon level to which the device was exposed. Results should be provided to you within 30 days. Some laboratories can give results over the Internet. You can be confident in the test results if you follow instructions carefully and immediately return the test kit to the laboratory.

In addition to testing radon levels, a homeowner concerned about radon exposure should consider other factors to determine radon risk. Does anyone in the household smoke? Are there children in the family? Do people spend unusually high amounts of time in the home, perhaps because of individual illnesses, ages, or occupations? Does anyone sleep in the basement, where radon levels are higher than on other floors?

The more affirmative answers you have to these questions, the sooner you should act to measure and reduce radon levels in your home.

For more information, call the Kansas Radon Program at 1-800-693-5343, or visit our Web site at <http://radon.oznet.ksu.edu>.