



# SOME FACTS ABOUT RADON



**Radon is an odorless radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer.** It comes from the natural decay of uranium in rocks and soil. It can seep into homes and other buildings, creating levels that can be dangerous. Radon can also be found in well water and can be released into the air during showering, dishwashing, and doing laundry.



## Why is Radon a Problem?

Exposure to high levels of indoor radon gas is second only to cigarette smoking as a cause of lung cancer in the United States. If you are exposed to high radon levels and also smoke, you are at an increased risk. Approximately one in four homes in Rhode Island test at or above the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level of 4.0 pCi/L. There is no federal or state standard for radon in private well water however, an elevated level can contribute to radon in the air.

**The threat posed by radon is completely preventable.**



## Radon in Your Home

Radon testing is easy and inexpensive. It is the only way to find out your home's radon level and prevent health risks to you and your family.

Several easy-to-use test kits for radon are available. A homeowner, tenant, or a radon inspector can perform radon testing in residential properties. It is recommended that radon testing be repeated every three to five years, especially if your home has been remodeled. A list of radon inspectors and mitigation contractors is available on RIDOH's website at [health.ri.gov/programs/radoncontrol](http://health.ri.gov/programs/radoncontrol).



## Reducing Radon Levels

There are several ways to fix, or reduce, a radon problem. The most common method is called sub-slab depressurization. This method involves installing a pipe through the basement floor allowing the radon gas to escape outside the home. Radon in well water can be removed with a water aeration system. A licensed radon mitigation contractor can assist in finding the best method to reduce radon in your home.



## Building a New Home?

If you are building a home, there are things that can be done during construction to reduce radon levels. These features limit the amount of radon that can get into the home and may also reduce moisture and other soil gas problems. Request that your builder use radon-resistant construction techniques.



## Buying an Existing Home?

Rhode Island Real Estate Disclosure Law requires that the seller tell you about prior elevated radon test results. You, as the buyer, should test for radon before you purchase a home.



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## Radon Tests

There are two types of tests: a short-term radon screening test (two to four days) or a long-term test device (90-365 days). Due to natural variations in radon levels, a short-term test may not accurately reflect your true risk. A long-term radon test will provide a better idea of the year-round radon level in your home. If you have an elevated radon level in your home and you have a well, you should also test the well water.

### Testing Chart by Property Type

	Selling/Buying	Own/Rent
Testing	In one area: two short-term tests at same time or two sequential tests.	In one area: one short-term test. If result is higher than 4.0 pCi/L, then do a second test.
	When using two short-term tests for a home sale, use the average of the two test results.	Renters only need to test if they live in the basement, or on the first or second floor.
Where to Test	Test away from windows, doors, external walls and at least 20 inches above the floor.	
	All tests should be done on the lowest, lived-in level (e.g. frequently used basement).	
How to Test	Close the windows and doors at least 12 hours before the test begins and follow instructions on test kit. Return kit to lab immediately after test.	



## Understanding Your Radon Test Results

Your test results will be reported in units of pico-Curies per Liter (pCi/L), a measure of radon concentration. There is no "safe" level of radon; however, action is recommended by the US EPA if levels are higher than 4.0 pCi/L to reduce your radon and lung cancer risk.

### Resources:

RIDOH: <http://health.ri.gov/healthrisks/poisoning/radon/>

US Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/radon>

University of Rhode Island: Well Water Fact Sheet: <https://web.uri.edu/safewater/files/TipSheetC13-Radon.pdf>

**For more information on radon call the Health Information Line 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711**