

2008 Monthly E&H Campaign: February

Radon—Protecting You and Your Family

Tuesday, 19th

What is radon and where is it found?

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Radon comes from the natural (radioactive) breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. It is odorless, colorless, and present in low concentrations in the air we breathe. The danger from radon is associated with breathing elevated levels of the gas over an extended period of time. Radon can accumulate in any type of building – homes, offices, and schools.

How does radon get into your home?

Radon gas typically moves through the soil and into homes through cracks, construction joints, gaps around pipes, and other holes in the foundation. It can be trapped and build up regardless of whether the home is old or new, drafty or well sealed, with or without a basement.

Can you test for radon?

Testing for radon is the only way to know if your family is at risk. Millions of Americans have already tested their homes. There are short and long term tests for radon. Because radon levels tend to vary from day to day and season to season, a short-term test is less accurate in predicting the year-round average radon level. If a short term test result exceeds the Environmental Protection Agency action level, additional testing should be done. Testing is not expensive- “screening type” test kits are readily available at most hardware stores. Professional testing companies can also be contacted to perform more sophisticated testing for a fee.

Can you fix a radon problem?

Radon reduction systems are effective and modestly priced. These systems work to ventilate the radon to outdoor air, reducing the concentration to acceptable levels. It is prudent to seek professional assistance with the installation of a radon reduction system. Post-installation testing will provide verification that the system is working as intended to reduce radon levels.

Where can you get more information?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency and the National Safety Council both have excellent websites with additional information and telephone hotlines. They are:

<http://www.epa.gov/radon>

<http://www.nsc.org/issues/radon/>

Visit the Communications E&H website for more information.



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