

Test Your Home for Radon

Radon Tipsheet #2



Testing for radon in air and well water—quick, easy, and critical to family health

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. High levels of radon gas occur naturally in Maine soil and water, and can move up into a house from the ground. The house then traps the radon in the air inside. Radon gas can also dissolve into well water, which is then released into the air when you use the water. Simple air and well water tests can show whether home radon levels meet state and national safety guidelines.

Any home can have a radon problem. Testing is the only way to find a problem.

It doesn't matter if your house is old or new or where it's located. The only way to know if your house has a problem is to test. If you have a well, you need to test your water along with your air. If you are buying or selling a house and testing for radon, state law requires you to use a Maine registered radon tester. Go to the website listed at the bottom of the page to find a registered tester.

Testing Your Air: You can test for radon in air using a simple test kit you can purchase from a registered testing lab for \$60 or less. Most radon air test kits are small bottles or canisters that you open for 2 to 7 days, and then reseal and send back to the lab. To get accurate results, follow the instructions that come with the test. Key instructions include:

- When possible, test when your heat is on (during cool months).
- Close all doors and windows for 12 hours before starting the test.
- Keep windows and doors closed during the test, except for normal coming and going.
- Place the bottles or canisters in the lowest livable area of the house – usually the basement.
- After the test time is over, mail the bottles/canisters back to the lab in the envelope provided by the lab.

Testing Your Well Water: Only well water, not town or public water, needs testing. Some wells have high levels of radon. The main danger comes from breathing in the radon when water is used. You can test for radon in well water using a simple test kit purchased from a Maine registered water testing lab, for about \$40 or less. Follow the instructions that come with it. Purchase a kit by using the list on the back.

Treatment systems work to lower radon levels in air and water.

Radon problems can be fixed. Once you test and know your radon numbers, you can plan next steps. In most homes, current methods make it possible to get air and well water levels below current safety guidelines.

If both air and well water tests are done, the results must be considered together to decide on the best and most cost effective fix.

To find a Maine registered tester (or a Maine registered lab for test kits if your home is not for sale), access the online database at maineradiationcontrol.org, click the link to Radon Service Providers

Protect your family. Learn. Test. Treat if needed.

- Check this website: www.MaineRadiationControl.org
- For advice: 1-800-232-0842 • radon.dhhs@maine.gov • TTY: 800-606-0215

