

HOW TO REDUCE RADON RISK

Radon is known to cause an increased risk of lung cancer. The risk is calculated based on constant exposure to a known radon level over a full 70 yr lifetime. Current smokers and ex-smokers are at greater risk from radon exposure than people who have never smoked. The USEPA recommended action level for radon in indoor air is 4.0 pCi/L. A non-smoker exposed to 4.0 pCi/L for 70 yrs is thought to have a 7/1000 (0.7%) chance of contracting lung cancer. The risk increases with the radon level.

If the home tests at 4.0 pCi/L or greater. Retest the home for confirmation. USEPA recommends that at least **two** do it yourself short-term tests, or one professionally done test be conducted before deciding to fix the home. It is normal for radon results to vary with the season. Most homes peak at their highest indoor radon levels in the winter months and usually show their lowest levels during the summer. Short term testing during periods of high precipitation or high sustained winds should also be avoided. Short-term testing during the Spring or Fall may better approximate your yearly average radon level. **A long term test lasting an entire year is the most accurate testing method and may be the most appropriate follow-up test for initial test results that are very close to 4.0 pCi/L**

Fixing the home. Most homes can be successfully mitigated to bring the radon levels down below 2.0 pCi/L. The normal radon level in outside air averages 0.4 pCi/L. Professional Radon testers and mitigators who are currently certified according to Virginia law can be found on the following websites: www.nrsb.org and www.nrpp.info. The cost of mitigation usually ranges between \$800 to \$2,000 for most homes, depending on the size and design.

Other lower cost options to reduce your exposure to radon:

- 1) **Quit smoking**
- 2) **Minimize the time spent in the lowest level of your home.** Radon levels are usually at least 25% higher there.
- 3) **Increase the ventilation of your lowest level.** Open windows and doors (when exterior weather conditions permit), adjust heating and air conditioning systems to increase ventilation, leave crawl space vents open, etc.
- 4) **Seal visible/accessible openings in your foundation.** Seal cracks, gaps & holes using polyurethane caulk, put an air-tight lid on sumps, cover/encase bare soil with a well sealed plastic barrier or concrete.

For more information: Contact the VDH Radon Program.

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