

SELLING YOUR HOME

Sellers should consider beginning a long-term test as soon as the decision to sell is made. In many cases, the time interval between deciding to sell and writing a contract or going to settlement is greater than the 91 days or more required for a long-term test.

The fact that your home *does not* have a radon problem could be a selling point to prospective buyers. Here's what you need to do.

Have your home tested. Remember, radon gas is odorless and colorless, so the only way to know whether your home has dangerous levels (4 pCi/L or higher) is to test your home.

If time is of the essence, as in a real estate transaction, short term tests can be completed in a matter of days. Long term tests take three months or more. You can buy simple, relatively inexpensive do-it-yourself radon test kits from a hardware or home store or by mail. You can also hire a professional testing company to conduct the test. Contact your state radon office to ensure the test kit or company you choose is certified as being proficient in your state.

If radon levels are elevated, have your home fixed. If testing confirms radon levels in your home at or above 4 pCi/L, EPA recommends that you take steps to lower the radon level. Radon levels can almost always be reduced to below 4 pCi/L.

HOME INSPECTORS

Home inspectors are often hired by buyers or sellers to examine a home before a real estate transaction is finalized. A professional inspection can alert a seller to existing or potential problems such as radon, allowing the seller to address them so as not to discourage a possible buyer. A buyer wants assurances before he or she buys that the property does not have structural or other problems that could lead to unanticipated expenses after purchase.

Basic home inspections cover all major mechanical and structural systems such as heating, electrical, plumbing or roofing. If the home already has a radon mitigation system, have it checked for proper operation. Many home inspectors are qualified to inspect for environmental problems, including measuring radon levels. If your home inspector is certified to measure radon, consider asking him to test the home.

TIP: If you hire a home inspector, ask for a radon test as part of the inspection.

Call CFAF's Radon Fix-It Line
1-800-644-6999
for free publications, referrals or lists of certified mitigators in your state.



Consumer Federation of America Foundation

LOWERING RADON LEVELS:

Help for Consumers

**RADON
FIX-IT PROGRAM
1-800-644-6999**

Radon is a cancer-causing gas produced by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water. It is odorless and colorless. It typically moves up through the ground and into homes through holes in the foundation. Homes trap radon inside where it can build up. Any home may have a radon problem, whether new or old, well-sealed or drafty, or with or without a basement.

Radon causes an estimated 14,000 lung cancer deaths each year. In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. If you smoke and your home has a high level of radon, your risk of lung cancer is especially high.

TEST FIRST

Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon. Any exposure to radon has some risk of causing lung cancer. The lower the radon level in your home, the lower your family's risk of lung cancer.

The U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommend testing for radon and reducing radon in homes that have high levels. Fix your home if your radon level is confirmed to be 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher.

The U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have determined that, after smoking, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer.

Consumer Federation of America Foundation's RADON FIX-IT LINE 1-800-644-6999

HOW TO GET HELP

Consumer Federation of America Foundation (CFAF), a nonprofit consumer organization, operates the Radon Fix-It Program free of charge. The Radon Fix-It Program provides guidance and encouragement to consumers with elevated radon levels of 4 pCi/L or higher to take the necessary steps toward fixing their homes. Fix-It Program operators provide:

- ☛ referrals to technical experts in your state government;
- ☛ lists of contractors certified by the National Environmental Health Association and/or the National Radon Safety Board who are qualified to offer advice and perform radon mitigation;

and information about:

- ☛ reducing elevated radon levels; and
- ☛ choosing a test kit or a testing company.
- ☛ testing in connection with a real estate transaction.

CFAF's toll-free Radon Fix-It Program is for people whose radon test results are 4 pCi/L or higher. People with elevated radon levels should call **1-800-644-6999**.

BUYING A HOME

Would you like to be sure the home you plan to buy does not have dangerous levels of radon? Here's how to do it.

Have the home tested. Because radon gas is odorless and colorless, the only way to know whether there are dangerous levels (4 pCi/L or higher) is to test the home.

If time is of the essence, as in a real estate transaction, short term tests can be completed in a matter of days. Long term tests take three months or more. Simple, relatively inexpensive do-it-yourself radon test kits can be purchased from a hardware or home store or through the mail. You can also hire a professional testing company to conduct the test. Be sure that the test kit or testing company you choose is certified as being proficient in your state.

Remember, elevated radon levels can be fixed and can almost always be reduced to below 4 pCi/L. If testing confirms radon levels in the home to be at or above 4 pCi/L, consider having the radon level reduced before you move in. Talk with your real estate professional or settlement attorney about how to put fixing the home into the purchase agreement.

The Consumer Federation of America Foundation is a nonprofit research and education organization founded in 1972 to conduct research and provide information to the public on consumer issues. CFAF is a cooperative partner with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Consumer Federation of America Foundation
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