

# January is Radon Action Month

Contact the Bay County Health Department's

Environmental Health Division

(989) 895-4006

For a **FREE** radon test kit.

**Offer available until January 30, 2009**

## *“Dealing With Radon in Real Estate Transactions”*

More and more informed buyers are having radon tests performed when considering the purchase of a home or office building. But what if an elevated concentration of radon is found? Does this mean you should walk away from your dream home? No! Radon reduction technology has improved so much over the last few years that reducing radon is easy and affordable.

*If you like a home, buy it!  
The radon can be reduced!*



### **Radon - What is it?**

Radon is an invisible, radioactive gas created from natural deposits of uranium in the soil. Radon gas can be drawn into a building and accumulate to concentrations that can cause a health concern. Finding high levels of radon in the home has nothing to do with the age, quality, or upkeep of the home.

### **How prevalent is radon in Michigan?**

Surveys conducted by the Michigan Department of Public Health Indoor Radon Program (now the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Indoor Radon Program) indicate that about 12% of the homes in Michigan are in excess of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's action level of 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). In some counties, as many as 40-45% of the homes may have levels exceeding that guideline. The only way to tell if a home has elevated levels of radon is to have the home tested. This is easy to do and there are many testing companies and home inspectors who offer radon measurement services. Look for individuals certified by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) or the National Radon Safety Board (NRSB).

## ***Don't despair if you find elevated radon concentrations!***

Reliable reduction techniques have been developed that will effectively control radon in buildings. Finding a home with a radon system already installed is a plus. Having one installed is affordable, reduces radon, and can enhance future resale value.

### **If I find a home with a radon problem, should I look for another home?**

If you look for another home, especially in the same area, chances are good that it will also have a radon concern, because radon is associated with the rocks and soils. ***Radon can be reduced!*** Just like a water drainage concern can be fixed with a sump, or a leaky roof can be replaced, a radon system can be installed to reduce the radon and at far less cost than these other home repairs. A radon system will actively draw the radon from beneath the home and exhaust it outside.

### **Of the problems that a house can have, radon is one of the easiest to identify and fix!**

If you are interested in a home that either has an existing radon reduction system, or tests have shown that a radon system may be warranted, rest assured that your dream house will only be improved by a radon system.

In fact, it has been shown that radon mitigation systems have additional benefits beyond reducing radon, such as reducing molds and mildews to which some people are allergic.

## ***Ask about radon before you buy or before you build!***

### **How expensive are these systems to install and operate?**

A reduction system consists of plastic pipe connected to the soil either through a hole in a slab, via a sump lid connection, or beneath a plastic sheet in a crawl space. Attached to the pipe is a quiet, continuously operating fan that discharges the radon outdoors.

- Typical installation cost: \$800 - \$1,500
- Average operating cost: \$3.00/month.
- Expected life span of fan: 11 years
- Fan replacement cost: \$145-\$300
- Periodic maintenance: none

### **Won't sealing the floor cracks take care of the problem?**

NO! Sealing floor cracks to keep radon out is as difficult as sealing floors and walls to keep water from seeping in. To control radon in an existing home, a collection system is installed to draw radon from the soil (like a sump collects water) and exhaust it to a safe location outside of the home. These radon reduction systems are called Active Soil Depressurization Systems.

### **Am I alone in being concerned about radon?**

Absolutely not! Thousands of people living in Michigan, joined by hundreds of thousands around the country, have had their homes tested for radon before they purchased them. Similarly, thousands of Michigan residents have had quiet, economical, and effective radon systems installed in their homes, and businesses.

### **Should I have the house fixed before or after I take possession?**

Radon mitigation technology has advanced to the point that the buyer can have the home fixed before or after purchasing it, with equal confidence of success.

Having the seller install the system removes it from your "to-do" list, but the quality of materials and aesthetics are left to someone else. Waiting until after you take possession gives you control of these items and also allows for the use of a long-term test to verify elevated radon levels. Funds can be escrowed for this purpose, but if this cannot be arranged and you want the house, you should be confident that the radon level can be reduced; so there is no need to walk away from your dream home.

### **Radon pointers:**

- Homes with radon can be reliably reduced to less than 4 pCi/L.
- Most systems can be installed in one day by a qualified contractor.
- The repairs take 24 hours to take effect before retesting can occur.
- The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality maintains lists of qualified testers and contractors.
- A radon problem can be found in any home, regardless of its age.
- Although more and more builders are installing radon systems, do not assume that a new home has one.

### **Helpful Documents:**

- [Home Buyers and Sellers Guide to Radon](#)
- [Consumers Guide to Radon Reduction](#)
- [Radon Mitigation Standards](#)
- Lists of measurement and mitigation professionals (certified by the [National Environmental Health Association](#) or the [National Radon Safety Board](#)).