



In Iowa, licensed radon measurement professionals can be located by visiting the Iowa Department of Public Health's website at www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp, where you can search for certified specialists by county or license number. For more information about radon, you can contact the state radon program at 800-383-5992 or visit the EPA's website at www.epa.gov/radon and the American Lung Association at www.lungusa.org.



Iowa Department of Public Health
Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

IOWA RADON HOME- BUYERS AND SELLERS FACT SHEET





What is Radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring gas found in soil, created through the radioactive decay of elements like uranium and radium. In Iowa, glacial movement from the past deposited various minerals, including uranium, into the soil and upper ground layers. Since radon is a gas, it can move into structures such as homes. It is colorless, odorless, and radioactive, posing health risks to humans when breathed in.

Where is Radon found in Iowa?

The EPA has classified every county in Iowa as Zone 1, indicating that the expected average indoor radon level is above 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). The statewide average indoor radon concentration in Iowa is approximately 8.5 pCi/L, compared to the national average of 1.3 pCi/L. Radon levels at or above 4 pCi/L are considered high, and mitigation is advised.

The main contributor to elevated radon levels in homes is the soil beneath and around the structure. Radon can be present in both older and newer homes, regardless of whether they have basements. **According to data from residential radon testing, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) estimates that between 50% and 70% of homes in Iowa may have radon levels above the recommended limit.** Radon concentrations can differ greatly depending on the location and can vary significantly even between neighboring homes on the same street or within the same neighborhood.

How does Radon get into a home?

As warm air rises inside a home, it creates a slight vacuum in the lower parts of the structure. This pressure difference allows radon to flow from the higher-pressure soil into the lower-pressure interior of the house. Radon enters in much the same way as air and other gases from the ground, seeping through the soil beneath and surrounding the home. It can get in through cracks in the foundation, floors, or walls; gaps in hollow-block walls; spaces around pipes, floor drains, and sump pumps;

as well as through crawl spaces.

What are the Health Effects of Radon?

Extensive scientific research confirms that prolonged exposure to high levels of radon significantly increases the risk of developing lung cancer.

The radiation released by radon can damage lung tissue at the cellular level, potentially leading to cancer. Among nonsmokers, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer, and overall, it ranks as the second highest cause. Nationwide, radon exposure is linked to an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths annually. According to EPA estimates, around 400 of those deaths occur each year in Iowa due to long-term radon exposure.

How can homebuyers in Iowa determine if the property they are purchasing has high radon levels?

Prospective homebuyers in Iowa can have a property tested for radon by reaching out to a licensed or certified radon measurement professional. A directory of certified radon specialists in Iowa is available at www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp, where searches can be done by county. Buyers may also ask a real estate agent for assistance in locating a qualified radon tester. **It's important to note that the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the American Lung Association, and the Surgeon General all recommend testing both new and existing homes for radon prior to a sale or ownership transfer.**

How can high radon levels be corrected?

Certified radon mitigation professionals can install systems designed to permanently reduce radon levels in a home. These systems typically include a suction point that targets the soil beneath the building to prevent radon from entering the living space. Homes equipped with mitigation systems usually show radon levels well below the EPA's recommended action level of 4 picocuries per liter. Taking steps to reduce radon is a strong move toward improving indoor air quality. A directory of certified radon mitigation contractors in Iowa can be found by visiting www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp and selecting the list by county. For additional information, a radon resource packet is also available

by calling 1-800-383-5992.

Additional Information:

Further details about radon can be obtained by contacting the state radon program at 800-383-5992. You can also visit the EPA's website at www.epa.gov/radon or the American Lung Association website at www.lungusa.org.