



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: All newspapers and radio stations in McLeod County

FROM: Brittany Becker, PHN

January is National Radon Action Month

About 2 in 5 homes have dangerous levels of radon; every home should be tested

Radon is the leading environmental cause of cancer deaths in the United States and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. More than 21,000 lung cancer deaths are attributed to radon each year in the U.S.

Fortunately, the risk is largely preventable, by testing homes and fixing radon problems. About 2 in 5 Minnesota homes have dangerous levels of radon gas and state health officials say every home should be tested.

Radon is an odorless, colorless and tasteless radioactive gas that occurs naturally in Minnesota soils. It can enter into all kinds of homes through cracks or openings in walls or foundations. The only way for residents to know if their home has radon is to test.

Testing is easy, inexpensive and only takes 3-5 days. The best time to test is during the heating season, but testing can be done year-round. Test kits are available in a variety of settings including health departments, many hardware stores, or directly from radon testing laboratories. A list of participating health agencies and test kit vendors can be found on the MDH web site at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/rncontacts.html>

Tests should be done in the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied. If your home's level is at or above 4 pCi/L, you should consider verification testing and having a radon mitigation system installed. Anyone interested in mitigating his or her home for radon should consult MDH's list of certified radon mitigation contractors at

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/mitigation.html>

During the month of January, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is sponsoring radio and internet ads in the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota to encourage people to test their homes. In addition, MDH has partnered with local public health departments to make test kits available to local residents at low or no cost. Free test kits are available to all McLeod County residents at McLeod County Public Health located at 1805 Ford Avenue in Glencoe. Free test kits can also be obtained at McLeod County's Household Hazardous Waste Facility located at 1065 5th Ave. SE in Hutchinson.

The Minnesota Radon Awareness Act that went into effect on January 1, 2014 now requires disclosure and information be provided to buyers about radon during Minnesota home sales. The law requires sellers to inform buyers whether their home has been tested for radon and if so, what the levels are and whether the home has been mitigated for radon. In addition, sellers must provide a warning statement and a 2-page publication to the buyer. Radon tests can be incorporated into a home inspection. The law does not require radon testing or mitigation.

Another law requires all new homes built since 2009 be built with passive radon resistant features. About 1 in 5 of these newer homes have radon above the recommended action level; this is an improvement over the levels found in the overall Minnesota housing stock where about 2 in 5 homes have elevated levels. MDH encourages builders to activate the passive radon resistant features through the addition of a radon fan. In addition, new home buyers can request the fan be added during construction. In these new homes with radon fans, MDH has found very low radon concentrations.

MDH has been promoting a Gold Standard for Radon Resistant New Construction Program to builders for over four years. Companies that participate in this program are promoted through MDH's website and print advertising and receive a point towards the Green Path designation. In addition, MDH provides technical support to builders, such as free radon fans for model homes and radon test kits.

To educate real estate professionals and builders about radon, MDH offers continuing education classes at no cost. Real estate companies, builders and their associations that are interested in the classes can contact MDH or review the course information at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/reestatetrain.html> For more information on radon visit www.health.state.mn.us/radon or call the Minnesota Department of Health Indoor Air Unit at 651-201-4601 or 1-800-798-905}. To see how radon has affected the lives of cancer patients and their families visit www.CanSar.org.