



Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • www.scdhec.gov

Radon

Radon is a radioactive gas found naturally in many types of soil and rock. It's formed when uranium decays. In outdoor air, radon is diluted so that it's relatively harmless. But in an enclosed space such as a home, radon can build up to dangerous levels. Unfortunately, you can't see it, taste it, or smell it.

Radon in Homes:

Radon can enter a house through:

- Floor/wall joints
- Loose fitting pipes
- Floor/drains/sumps
- Soil or rock in crawlspace
- Building materials (brick, concrete, rock)
- Cracks/flaws in floor slab
- Cracks/flaws in foundations/walls
- Your water supply (especially private wells)

While all houses contain some radon, levels vary. Your home may have one level, your neighbor's home, another. The only way to know is to test.

We measure radon in picoCuries per liter of air (pCi/L). While there is no truly safe level of indoor radon, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency urges people to take action to reduce levels if their home has more than 4.0 pCi/L of radon.

Health Concerns:

Long-term exposure to high levels of radon can lead to lung cancer. In fact, radon is believed to be the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers.

Your risk of lung cancer is greatly increased if your home has high levels of radon and if you smoke or live with someone who smokes. Indoor radon is more dangerous to health than outdoor radon.

Unlike some indoor air pollutants, radon does not cause headaches, nausea, sneezing, or other similar symptoms.

Testing for Radon:

Testing for radon levels in your home is easy and inexpensive and it only takes a few minutes. You can buy radon test kits at hardware stores or you can hire a certified radon tester. Test kits are **free** from S.C. DHEC. To get one, call the S.C. Radon hotline at (800) 768-0362 or (864) 241-1090. Or send an email to radon@dhec.sc.gov.

For more information:

S.C. Radon Hotline: (800) 768-0362 or (864) 241-1090

Radon Web site: <http://www.scdhec.gov/radon>

Email: radon@dhec.sc.gov

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Radon Hotline: (800) SOS-RADON (767-7236)

Radon Web site: <http://www.epa.gov/radon>

For certified contractors contact:

National Radon Safety Board

<http://www.nrsb.org>

National Environmental Health Association

<http://www.radongas.org>

DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality, Innovations Section provides information on environmental topics. Readers are encouraged to reproduce this material. For more information about air quality issues, please call (803) 898-4123 or visit our website at www.scdhec.gov/baq. Please send written correspondence to: DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality, Innovations Section, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

