



## Test for, fix home radon problems

By Susan H. Howe • University of Nevada • January 1, 2011

### Cooperative Extension

Why be concerned about radon gas in your home? You can't see, taste or smell it, so it doesn't seem to pose an immediate problem to the home's inhabitants.

But, radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas, comes from the decay of uranium in rock and soil, and it is present in elevated concentrations in many homes and buildings. It can enter any building that has contact to the ground and can accumulate to dangerous levels, posing a health risk to its inhabitants.

Radon is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer deaths for nonsmokers. For smokers, the risk is increased exponentially.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates about 20,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer caused by indoor radon exposure. Radon-induced lung cancer kills more people than secondhand smoke, drunken driving or home fires.

The only way to find out if you have radon in your home is test for it. A three-day test can be performed to determine the levels in your home. The Nevada Radon Education Program is offering free test kits at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension offices during January in recognition of National Radon Action Month. Your test result will tell you if you have no radon problems, a possible problem or elevated radon levels that need your immediate attention. The higher the radon level in your home, the faster you should take action to reduce your exposure.

If the test result is less than 4 pCi/l, then no further action is required. However, if the test was done in the summer months and/or closed house conditions were not observed, we recommend testing again in the winter heating months when closed house conditions can be observed more readily. The EPA recommends a home be tested every two years, and after remodeling or significant seismic activity occurs in the area. EPA also suggests mitigating the home if the annual average

is between 2 and 4 pCi/l, since any amount of radon can pose a health risk.

For details or to find out where to get a test kit, visit [www.RadonNV.com](http://www.RadonNV.com) or call 888-723-6610.

### Radon presentations

In recognition of National Radon Action Month, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension will radon programs at the following locations:

5:15 p.m., Jan. 4, Lyon County Library, 20 Nevin Way, Yerington

noon, Jan. 6, Downtown Reno Library, 301 S. Center St.

6:30 p.m., Jan. 10, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, 128 Market St., Stateline

6:30 p.m., Jan. 11, Carson Valley Improvement Club, 1604 Esmeralda Ave., Minden

6:30 p.m., Jan. 12, Carson City Senior Center, 911 Beverly Dr.

6 p.m., Jan. 13, Incline Village Library, 845 Alder Ave.

5 p.m., Jan. 18, Sparks Library, 1125 12th St.

6 p.m., Jan. 18, Humboldt County UNCE, 1085

Fairgrounds Rd., Winnemucca

6:30 p.m., Jan. 19, Spanish Springs Library, 7100A

Pyramid Lake Hwy., Sparks

6 p.m., Jan. 19, Great Basin College, Room 108, 1500

College Pkwy., Elko

4 p.m., Jan. 25, Sierra View Library, 4001 S. Virginia

St.

6 p.m., Jan. 26, Northwest Reno Library, 2325 Robb

Dr.

1:30 p.m., Jan. 29, South Valleys Library, 15650A

Wedge Pkwy.

A certified mitigator will be on hand at several presentation to talk about fixing homes with elevated radon levels. Call the Hot Line at 1-888-723-6610 for details.

### Advertisement

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Cooperative Extension also is sponsoring a Test Your Home for Radon and Win contest, which will award two homeowners in Carson City, Douglas or Washoe counties with a \$1,500 credit toward a radon mitigation system. Nevada homeowners who test Dec. 1 to Feb. 28, 2011, with Nevada Radon Program test kits and find radon levels of 4 pCi/l or above are eligible. Details: [www.RadonNV.com](http://www.RadonNV.com).

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