

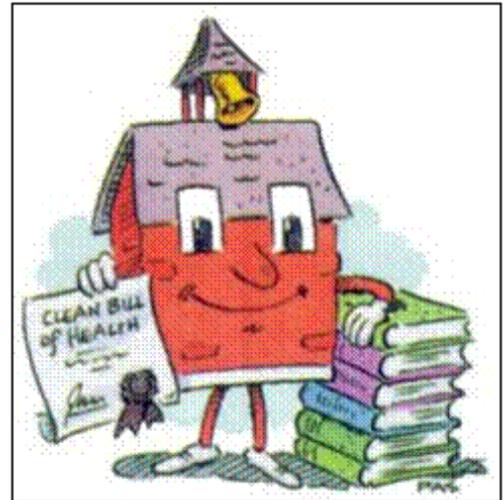


Free Radon Test Kits for Schools

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has available free radon test kits for Texas schools that would like to test their campuses for the presence of radon. We will work with the school to explain how to do the testing and provide written guidance. However, there is a limited supply of the free kits; it is estimated there is enough to do about 100 campuses, depending on the campus sizes. Once the kits are gone this offer will end as we expect to lose the funding for this program. Any school interested in this offer, please have them contact DSHS via my e-mail below.

WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a radioactive gas found in rock and nearly all soils. It can also come from well water. Radon from the natural decay of uranium in the ground seeps into buildings through cracks or openings in contact with the soil – **it is colorless, odorless and has no smell.** When radon seeps into homes or buildings, it becomes trapped and, over time, concentrated. The air in the school building becomes radioactive and creates a long-term health risk. The good news is that exposure can be prevented.



Radon enters buildings through:

- ✓ Cracks in concrete slabs
- ✓ Spaces behind brick veneer walls that rest on uncapped hollow-brick foundation
- ✓ Pores and cracks in concrete blocks
- ✓ Floor-wall joints
- ✓ Exposed soil, as in a sump
- ✓ Weeping (drain) tile, if drained to open sump
- ✓ Mortar joints
- ✓ Loose fitting pipe penetrations
- ✓ Open tops of block walls
- ✓ Building materials such as some rocks
- ✓ Water (from some wells)

Exposure to radon gas increases risk of lung cancer. The radon gas decays into radioactive particles that are trapped in the lungs and release small bursts of radioactive energy which, over time, can damage the lung tissues and increase the risk of lung cancer. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. Smoking combined with radon is an especially serious health risk. Testing for radon and reducing high levels of radon, when present, can prevent this risk and create a healthy school environment.

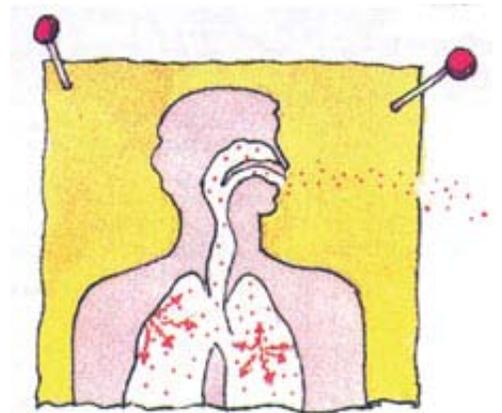
WHAT DOES RADON TESTING INVOLVE?

Performing a school radon test consists of:

- Selecting the rooms to test. Normally all occupied basement and ground level classrooms and offices are recommended to be tested. DSHS can provide guidance in determining which rooms need testing
- Obtaining the free DSHS supplied short-term (2 days) radon test kits from DSHS. The kit consists of a 3"x4" activated charcoal tray (radon detector); an envelope for the tray; a form for recording kit number and location, test start and end dates, and the time; and a return waybill information.
- Deploying the kits in the rooms selected recording the information on the form provided.
- After two days, retrieving each charcoal tray, sealing it in the radon tight envelope, and recording the end time on the form.
- Placing all the kits in a box with the form to mail for the free laboratory analysis.
- Mailing trays immediately using postage-paid waybill provided by the program (radon decays, so a delay could invalidate the results).

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF RADON IS A PROBLEM?

The only way to determine the level of radon is to test for it. The EPA recommends that all schools be tested for radon levels. If test results are over 4.0 picocuries/liter (pCi/L), a second test should be run and, if still high, action should be taken to reduce or mitigate the radon. Rarely is a radon problem found in Texas schools, and when there is it is generally limited to a room or two. Sealing leaks in the floor or adding more fresh air to the room can resolve some problems. If necessary the DSHS state radon office can assist in locating certified mitigation specialists in your area.



CONTACT INFORMATION

To order radon test kits:

Email Radon@dshs.state.tx.us (email preferred)

Call 1-800-293-0753, ext. 0

For more information on the program contact:

Quade R. Stahl, Ph.D., Environmental Specialist, DSHS

Email: Quade.Stahl@dshs.state.tx.us

Phone: (512) 834-6787, ext. 2444

Fax: (512) 834-6726

Or visit the Website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/radiation/radon.shtm