

(edited 3/21/09)

From the Radon Mitigator, proud affiliate of:



In this issue I will try to address a couple of common questions with Radon and the Real-estate transaction. These as well as other concerns with testing will be discussed @ the Joint Realtor®/Home Inspector Committee meeting the third Tuesday in May.

- **Is radon really a health risk? I've heard it is a scam!**

Yes, radon is a Class A carcinogen, which means it is known to cause cancer in humans. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking, and results in approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year. Not everyone who breathes radon will develop lung cancer. Your risk is determined by such things as how much radon is in your home (and/or workplace, school, or other indoor environment); the amount of time you spend in your home (and/or workplace, school, or other indoor environment); and whether you smoke or have ever smoked. The longer you are exposed, the higher the radon level equals the greater the risk.

- **A Home Inspector tested my home for Radon and found it to be 4.5 pCi/l. This is just slightly above the EPA remediation action level and my home tested at 3 pCi/l just three years earlier. Why is this?**

Many things can affect the Radon levels in a home. One very common reason is that if your house was tested before November of 2006 it may have been tested by a slightly different protocol. Pre-November of 2006 many homes were not tested in basements. This was because the protocol said to test in the lowest area of the home that didn't have to be remodeled or finished to live in. The EPA Testing protocol revision in November of 2006 has everyone test on the lowest level of a home that the occupant can use regularly whether it is finished or unfinished.

Another reason could be that recent construction to your home or an adjacent home and has capped more ground surface area around you. This would have blocked Radon gas from escaping to atmosphere and possibly increased the entry to your home. Radon is an inert gas that means it doesn't readily mix with other substances, so it is trying to vent to the outside. Your home could be the easier escape route if the ground around you has been covered.

There could be many more possibilities but the only way you will know is to test your home every couple of years.

- **If I find/fix a radon problem, will I have a hard time selling my home?**

There is always a possibility that a future buyer may be confused about radon and view a mitigation system as a bad thing. However, with positive marketing, a radon mitigation system can be a selling point. Other homes in the area may also have radon problems and the fact that a radon mitigation system already installed can be a selling point knowing that the problem has already been identified and corrected.

- **Do Radon testers and Mitigators have to be licensed?**

North Carolina does not require a Mitigator or Tester to be licensed. It is advisable however that they be at least certified by one of the following organizations. This will assure your client that the person performing the work has been trained to follow proper standards and procedures to attain the correct Radon readings and/or reduction of elevated radon levels within the home.

- [National Environmental Health Association](#)
- [National Radon Safety Board](#)

You should always inquire that the person or firm you are dealing with for your Radon services is fully insured, to include General liability, Errors and Omissions and Workers Compensation.

As an added benefit I also carry a pollution rider as Radon is considered hazardous waste.

- **If I find a radon problem, what next? (Can it be fixed? Who does this kind of work? What does it cost? What do they do to fix a radon problem?)**

Elevated radon levels can be reduced, but first you should confirm that you really have a problem by conducting follow-up measurements. When a problem has been confirmed, you may want to hire a professional radon mitigation contractor to help you reduce the levels. (Radon mitigation contractors are not licensed in North Carolina, but you are encouraged to use an individual who is certified by the [National Environmental Health Association](#) or the [National Radon Safety Board](#).)

Occasionally, when the radon levels are fairly close to the guideline of 4 picocuries per liter (4 pCi/l), caulking and sealing radon entry points may be enough to bring the radon down to acceptable levels. However, caulking and sealing does not always provide the reduction you need, and it is seldom a long-term solution to a real radon problem. In most cases, a professional contractor would install a sub-slab depressurization (SSD) system and provide a guarantee of levels below 4 pCi/l. (There are other methods, but SSD is the most common technique used in North Carolina.) The SSD system utilizes a vent pipe and fan to reduce the pressure under your slab (or a vapor barrier in your crawlspace), exhausting radon and other soil gases above the eave of the roof so it can be quickly diluted by the atmosphere.

The cost of a radon mitigation system in North Carolina can vary significantly depending on where you are in the state and who you hire. A typical range in price would be \$1500-\$2400.

Should you need more info Please contact Mark Sheets, Sheets Radon Reduction (336) 767 - 4123, msheets_1@yahoo.com or Mark@PIATriad.com.

More information can also be obtained by contacting one of our associates at:

www.PIATRIAD.com

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