

Steps for Planning Successful

Radon Outreach Activities

Start the New Year off right by conducting a National Radon Action Month activity or event. A successful National Radon Action Month will boost your efforts to educate your community about the dangers of radon throughout the entire year and the importance of radon testing, mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction.

There are several key steps to conducting a successful National Radon Action Month activity or event. These include:

- 1 Set goals for your activity/event
- 2 Plan your activities
- 3 Conduct your activity
- 4 Measure your results

Below we present ideas to help you think through, plan, conduct, and evaluate your activities.

1. Setting Your Goals

Whether you are conducting a single National Radon Action Month event, or developing an entire radon risk reduction program for your community, it is important to set goals to define what you will achieve. Establishing goals will help you to think through which activities provide the most potential for reducing radon risk in your community. The U.S. EPA, the states, industry leaders, and partner organizations have set a national goal of doubling the number of lives saved from radon exposure in five years. You can make an important contribution to this national effort by setting an ambitious goal for National Radon Action Month and the year ahead.

Whenever possible, your goals should be measurable (meaning you have ways to track your progress against your goal) and should include a timeline for achievement. Examples of radon goals that might make sense for your community include:

- ▶ During National Radon Action Month, 500 additional homes will be tested for radon in my community. To achieve this, we will hold three local events to educate the public about the dangers of radon reaching 300 people, and work with local media to direct people to our state radon hotline. As a result, we expect a 50% increase in local calls to the hotline, resulting in 700 discounted kits to be requested by interested homeowners.

- ▶ By 2010, 25% of all homes in my community will have been tested for radon.
- ▶ By 2011, 50% of homes in my community that have radon levels in excess of EPA's action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) will have been mitigated.
- ▶ By 2012, 50% of all new homes in my community will be built using radon resistant construction techniques.

In order to establish your program goals, it is always a good idea to know your baseline (i.e. where you are starting from). Your local health department or state program may be able to provide you with information on the number of radon tests conducted in your area to date, the number of homes tested that have radon levels that exceed EPA's radon action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), and information on the number of new homes built in your area. This baseline information will help you set goals for your program and activities that are reasonable and attainable.

In addition to your overall program goals, it is important to establish other outputs and outcomes to measure the success of your activities. You might choose to measure:

- ▶ # of people attending an event.
- ▶ # of radon educational materials distributed.
- ▶ # of radon test kit coupons distributed and collected (redeemed).
- ▶ # of radon test kits distributed.
- ▶ # of calls to your or your state's radon program.
- ▶ # of "hits" on your radon Web site.
- ▶ # of articles about radon published in local media (and how many people are reached).
- ▶ # of radon Public Service Announcements aired (and how many people are reached).
- ▶ # of proclamations or radon challenges issued.
- ▶ # of media interviews conducted.
- ▶ # of radon presentations given.

For every activity you plan, you should consider what you would like to measure and how each activity relates to your radon risk reduction goals. This information will help you determine which strategies produced the best results.

2. Planning Your Activities

Once you have decided on your goals and how you will measure your effectiveness, the next step is to plan your activities. The sooner you begin your planning, the more likely you will be able to secure the people and resources you need to have it be a success. Your activity plan should include:

- ▶ The action steps you will take to implement your activities.
- ▶ Assignment of responsibilities (i.e. who will help you in your efforts and what will they do).
- ▶ Timeline.
- ▶ Resources needed (i.e. what people, materials, or other resources will you need to plan and execute your event).

In planning your program or activity, there are several things you might want to consider:

- ▶ **Start Realistically.** It is better to have a successful small event than an unsuccessful large event. Know your available resources and the time you have available so you can plan an event that will maximize those resources. Your goal setting and planning should help you decide the best size event(s) for your community.
- ▶ **Meet Your Audience's Needs.** When planning your event(s), keep in mind who you are trying to reach, how they like to receive information, and who they most trust on issues related to health. Locate your activity in a place that is convenient for your target audience and consider how best to promote it.
- ▶ **Identify Key Speakers and Participants Early.** If your event requires an expert speaker or local official (e.g. a mayor or local celebrity), the sooner you can contact them and get your event on their calendar, the better. Talk with members of your target audience to determine who they trust for their health information. You are more likely to get participants in your events if they are excited about the speakers. It is also a good idea to identify back-up speakers.
- ▶ **Promote Your Event Broadly.** As part of your planning, determine how you will publicize your event. Consider the outlets (media and other) and methods that are the most known to and trusted by your target audience. Determine what lead time outlets need in order to publicize your event. And remember, not everyone gets their information from the same source, so consider a variety of outlets for promoting your events. Visit www.nram.cadmusweb.com to publicize your event on the National Radon Action Month Web site.
- ▶ **Make Your Event Interactive.** Depending on your event, be sure to allow plenty of time for your participants to ask questions and to interact with your speakers and other experts. If your activity includes information on radon testing, be sure to have sample test kits available and to demonstrate how to use test kits. Events can also be a good opportunity to form alliances and get commitments from partners.
- ▶ **Have Plenty of Materials On-Hand.** From health fairs to press events, it is critical that you have enough materials available to meet your audience's needs. Be sure to anticipate how many people will attend your event and to have materials on-hand for everyone. This is especially true for radon test kit coupons. Participants will be more likely to test if they can get a coupon onsite at your event. Also, people are more likely to attend events if they know they may receive free materials and giveaways. Publicize the free resources you will have at your event. (See pages 33-34 for a list of EPA materials that we will send to you at no cost. In addition, your state radon program may have radon informational materials and nominal giveaways for use at your event.)

Using Radon Test Kits to Track Results

You can use test kits to track your program results. To promote radon testing, customizable radon test kit coupons are available to community groups. Your community (or even a specific activity) can be assigned a specific test kit coupon number. For more information about the test kit coupon program, please contact Bruce Snead (bsnead@ksu.edu) at 785-532-4992 or Brian Hanson (bhanson@ksu.edu) at 785-532-4996.

You can also contact your local test kit manufacturer or provider for information on ordering test kits or test kit coupons with special codes or serial numbers linked to your activity or program. With tracking codes, you may be able to find out how many test kits were purchased and sent to the radon laboratory for analysis in addition to determining radon test results. Contact your state radon program, details available at www.epa.gov/iaq/wherelive.html, for more information about obtaining test kits from your state or from a radon testing company or laboratory in your area.

3. Implementing Your Plan

Once you have set your goals and made your plans, it is time to act! All of your advanced planning will help your National Radon Action Month activities come off more smoothly.

Successful events:

- ▶ Are well publicized to ensure the target audience knows where and when the event is, how they get there, and what to expect.
- ▶ Have clear, achievable, and measurable goals.
- ▶ Involve careful, thoughtful planning.
- ▶ Have built-in mechanisms for tracking the activity's success in relation to the established goals and objectives. (See the following section on measuring activity results).

Keep in mind that increasing awareness and motivating people to take action takes time. Creating increased awareness about radon and the importance of radon testing will not happen overnight. However, each event that you plan or activity that you undertake will bring you closer to your goal of safeguarding your community's health.

4. Measuring Your Results

Measuring the results of your program or activity is important for determining success. When measuring the success of your radon activities, ask yourself:

- ▶ How did my activities contribute to achieving my goals?
- ▶ What impact is my program or activity having in my community?
- ▶ How can the experience and the data I receive help me to improve my program?



- ▶ What other activities have proven to be the most effective in educating my community about radon and the importance of radon testing and mitigation?

Measuring results can be relatively simple depending on the activity or event. Consider administering a simple questionnaire or survey to participants. You can also use an event log or other tracking sheet at your event to keep track of:

- ▶ How many people attend (and their contact information).
- ▶ How many materials are distributed, especially if you are giving out radon test kits or test kit coupons.
- ▶ How many members of the press your event attracts and how much media coverage your event generates.
- ▶ How many requests for follow up or additional information you receive.
- ▶ How many people pledge to test their home for radon.

Ultimately, your goal is to achieve as many mitigations of high radon homes and new homes built radon resistant as possible, as these are the long-term results that save lives. If your state program has reporting requirements, determine what data may be available to you. Use this information when setting your goals and measuring your results. You may also consider partnering with local mitigators and builders to host your events and activities and measure results of your outreach efforts. By helping you achieve your goals to educate the public about radon they will be helping create more demand for radon services—a possible win-win situation for everyone.

EPA is particularly interested in hearing about your successful activities and your results so we can share great ideas and effective activities with our nationwide network of radon partners. Please share information about your events using the Activity Submittal Form at www.radonleaders.org/nram/addevent. After your event, please respond when we follow up with you to get information about your results. You will also have an opportunity to learn more about successful strategies your colleagues from across the country are using to save lives from radon exposure.