

Tips for Working with Your

Local Official

Engaging Your Elected Officials to Promote Radon Awareness

National Radon Action Month is the perfect time to get your local and state officials involved in radon outreach programs. Elected officials can be valuable allies in educating the public about the health affects of radon and the importance of testing. Use the customizable sample letter to an elected official on page 31 to recruit him or her to be a radon leader and help save lives. Examples of actions your elected official could take include the following:

- ▶ Issue a proclamation to proclaim January as National Radon Action Month and hold a proclamation signing ceremony (see below).
- ▶ Issue a press release and conduct interviews with local media about the importance of testing homes for radon and fixing homes with a problem.
- ▶ Record a radio or video public service announcement to promote radon awareness and testing. Contact the National Council of State Legislatures for more information.
- ▶ Feature National Radon Action Month activities, links to your state radon program, and National Radon Action Month banners that link to www.epa.gov/radon, on your Web site.
- ▶ Attend a radon poster contest award ceremony or sign a certificate of recognition for the winner. View the winners of the National Radon Poster Contest at www.sosradon.org. Hold an event in your city during National Radon Action Month and provide free or low-cost test kits.

If you are seeking a proclamation:

- ▶ Contact your mayor's or governor's office to determine how proclamations are issued and to get your proclamation on the schedule in January (proclamations can take several months so plan early). If your governor is issuing a proclamation, encourage your mayor to do the same.
- ▶ Write a sample proclamation and send it with a request letter (see page 32) to the appropriate person in the official's office.
- ▶ Provide the official's office with information about radon, health statistics, and National Radon Action Month community activities. Follow up with the official's office to check on the status of your request.
- ▶ Coordinate a proclamation signing ceremony and invite the media and community stakeholders. Press coverage can attract attention to the proclamation and radon issues. Ask the official's office if you can post the proclamation in public places.

Successful Partnering Approaches to Promote Radon Awareness

To promote the 2008 National Radon Action Month, Cindy Ladage and her team at the Illinois Emergency Management Association (IEMA) partnered with the American Lung Association of Illinois (ALA) and the American Respiratory Health Association (ARHA). The team coordinated successful activities to raise radon awareness and promote free radon test kits.

The Illinois Radon Awareness Act went into effect January 1, 2008; just in time to pique media and consumer interest in radon risk awareness during National Radon Action Month. The governor announced the new law as he issued the proclamation, drawing more attention to January efforts.

IEMA hosted four continuing education courses for real estate agents, utilizing its partnership with the Association of Realtors to create a curriculum, approved it for continuing education credits, and promote the courses to realtors. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) approached IEMA to create a course focusing on radon and radon-resistant building. Cindy and her team presented this course to employees of the construction and demolition industry, home inspectors, developers, realtors, code officials, and property managers.

Cindy and ALA also presented radon risk information and gave away test kits to EPA Region 5 and ALA employees. She and her partners conducted a media campaign on the distribution of free radon test kits during January and sent a press release that was picked up by local newspapers, magazines, and other publications. ARHA worked with news media contacts to publish coupons for free test kits from IEMA, receiving attention in markets of over nine million such as Chicago.

The results were astounding! In January, the IEMA distributed over 8,000 test kits. So many test kits were requested, IEMA was backlogged until February when they distributed another 8,000 test kits and in March, over 7,000. IEMA distributed more than 33,000 radon test kits to date in 2008.