National Radon Action Month, 2003

During National Radon Action Month, our nation is reminded of the serious danger that radon gas poses to us in our homes. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that radon causes between 15,000 and 22,000 U.S. deaths from lung cancer annually and the U. S. Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking.

Radon is a health risk facing millions of families across the country. Unfortunately many families are unaware of the danger.

Radon gas is a natural threat that results from the natural decay of the uranium that is found in nearly all soils in the United States. Radon gas moves through the ground into the air around and in homes through cracks and holes in the building's foundation. Without proper ventilation, houses trap radon indoors, where it can accumulate. Any home, new or old, may have a high radon level. Although some areas of the country have naturally higher radon levels than others, the only way to be certain whether a home has high radon levels is to test for it. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that 85 percent of homes in the country have never been tested.

Currently there are simple, inexpensive, effective tests available to detect radon, and mitigation strategies have been developed to help protect residents whose homes, schools, or places of business have elevated radon levels.

This month, I encourage all Americans to learn more about the danger of radon, test your homes, and, if warranted, take the steps necessary to reduce your exposure to it. The US Environmental Protection Agency is working with a wide consortium of partners to educate Americans about the health threat posed by radon. I applaud the tireless efforts of our partners who are working to raise public awareness and minimize the danger that radon poses to the American people.

As Assistant Administrator of the Office of Air and Radiation in the United States Environmental Protection Agency, I urge the recognition of the month of January 2003, as National Radon Action Month. I encourage our partners and programs to honor this observance with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

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