



RADON: TEST, FIX, SAVE A LIFE.



JANUARY IS NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH



EVENT PLANNING KIT

Welcome and Introduction

*Thank you for your interest in National Radon Action Month. Radon is a serious health risk facing tens of thousands of Americans.* Exposure to radon gas causes more than 20,000 deaths annually and it is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. The challenge is that we can't see, smell, or taste it, so it's easy to forget that radon may be a problem in any home, school, or building in the country. The potential exists to double the lives saved from radon exposure over five years. To protect the lives of all Americans, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated January as National Radon Action Month. This is a great opportunity to increase awareness of radon, promote radon testing and mitigation, and advance the use of radon-resistant new construction practices.

The Kit includes helpful suggestions and many useful templates for you to customize.

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Individuals, groups, and organizations concerned about healthy people, homes, and communities are the driving force in getting the message out to the public about the dangers of indoor radon. Your efforts are important, and EPA wants to do everything possible to make it easier for you. That is why we have developed this Event Planning Kit for your use.

You will find information and materials in this Kit that you can use to get the word out about radon. Use these resources to conduct activities that will yield real progress toward reducing radon risk. The materials are designed to be customized, so please feel free to add or delete language, combine projects, or—even better—invent your own new projects!

Radon can be deadly, but remember that the message you are delivering is a hopeful one. Testing for radon and addressing radon risk can save lives. We wish you the greatest success with your National Radon Action Month activities.

*Please visit [www.epa.gov/radon/nram](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram) for help planning and publicizing your National Radon Action Month activities.*

# Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities

January is National Radon Action Month—a perfect time to promote radon awareness, testing and mitigation, and radon resistant new construction (RRNC). Radon testing is generally easiest and most effective in cooler weather months when houses tend to be closed up for warmth.

Organizations just like yours are spreading the word about this preventable health risk. Find inspiration from a sample of their events listed below. Consider contacting your state radon program for help in planning your activities. You can find contact information for your state program at <http://epa.gov/radon/whereyoulive.html>.

## Choosing the Right Activities

Unsure how to start planning your radon outreach activities? The following questions can help direct you to the right activities for your organization and your community.

- ▶ **1. Are you looking to form new partnerships or seeking to mobilize your existing partners?** Read **section 1** for tips about fostering effective coalitions.
- ▶ **2. Are you aware of important opinion leaders in your community?** **Section 2** contains ideas for how to engage them in spreading the word about radon.
- ▶ **3. Looking for new ideas to jazz up your community events?** Learn what other groups have tried in their communities in **section 3**.
- ▶ **4. Does your group seek to reach families and children with messages about radon?** If so, read **section 4** for tips on working with youth.
- ▶ **5. Do you seek to reach a wide audience with specific key messages?** Consider implementing a media campaign. Check out **section 5** for tips on working with the media.
- ▶ **6. Are you looking to raise awareness in the workplace?** **Section 6** can help you communicate effectively in the work environment.

## 1. Energize Your Partners and Stakeholders

### **Build a Radon Coalition in Your Community**

There are many individuals and organizations in your community that have an interest in health topics. Hold an open forum for interested individuals to attend and then establish a coalition to promote radon awareness in your community. Every member of your coalition will have unique ideas for radon activities and will have access to different parts of your community. Working together as a group will be the most effective way to make radon testing and mitigation a reality in all buildings in your community.

### **Recognize Radon Champions**

If you already have a radon coalition, National Radon Action Month is an excellent opportunity to recognize your partners for their hard work. Host an awards ceremony to honor exceptional radon advocates. Use the opportunity to inspire and energize your radon partners.

### **Ask Local Chapters of Health and Environmental Organizations to Promote Radon Awareness**

Many local organizations in your community have regular newsletters, listservs, or mailings that they use to reach their members. Contact them to ask them to run an article on radon health risk, testing, mitigation, and radon resistant new construction. Be sure to include information on how to obtain additional radon information.

Please see pages 11 and 17 of this Kit for information on obtaining radon test kits and ordering customizable test kit coupons for tracking your activities.

## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

### **Host a Radon Training Workshop**

Provide continuing education for key professionals such as homebuilders, real estate professionals, and environmental health professionals. Successful programs have included lunch and learn seminars, training courses for governmental housing officials, and meetings about radon resistant new construction.

## **2. Engage Community Leaders**

### **Ask Your Mayor or City Council to Issue a Radon Proclamation**

Invite your elected officials to proclaim January as "Radon Action Month." Encourage all community members to test for radon. Tips for working with local officials and a sample proclamation that you can customize are included in this Event Planning Kit on page 30.

### **Ask Community Leaders to Spread the Word about Radon**

Churches, community centers, even local beauty salons and barbershops, can be effective venues for reaching out to your community. Contact ministers, community leaders, and local civic leaders and encourage them to conduct radon outreach to their members. Provide them with educational materials and information on test kits to make it easy for them to partner with you.

### **Work with Health Advocates and Educators**

Coordinate with your local health care providers and other health-focused groups, such as the American Lung Association, to have booths, educational sessions, and presentations on radon. Invite your mayor or other officials to your event to issue a proclamation and to conduct a press event.

### **Connect with Local Businesses**

Home improvement and hardware stores may carry radon test kits. Encourage them to promote radon testing in homes, schools, and other buildings. Ask them to create radon test kit displays in prominent store locations during National Radon Action Month and to include information on radon testing in mailings or other advertisements during January.

### **Contact Your Local University Medical Schools and Health Care Professionals**

Health care students and practitioners can serve as speakers for your health fairs and community events. You can also work with health care providers to incorporate radon messages into their practices and provide educational materials for their patients. See page 4 for New York State's experience interacting with health care professionals.

### **Coordinate with Your Local Utilities to Promote Radon Awareness and Testing**

Send a bill insert to your local utility providers (e.g. water, gas, electric) and ask them to include it with their January bill statement mailings. This is an easy, effective, and inexpensive way to reach the vast majority of your community. For an example of reaching out to non-traditional stakeholders, see page 25 for Tennessee's experience.



### **Collaborate with Experts from the Radon Professionals Speaker's Bureau**

Coordinate with the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists, Inc. (AARST) for your community activities. You can contact local radon experts from the Radon Professionals Speaker's Bureau (through the National Radon Proficiency Program) to participate in your event as a speaker, conduct a radon test demonstration, or field questions from the media. AARST has the following Speaker's Bureau lists available:

**Radon Professionals Speaker's Bureau:** An extensive database of radon testers, mitigators, and other industry professionals across the country who are available for speaking opportunities. All experts have completed the National Radon Proficiency Program. View the list at: [www.radongas.org/speaker.htm](http://www.radongas.org/speaker.htm).

**AARST Key Radon Subject Experts:** A list of selected national experts who are available to speak about radon science and health risk. View the list at: [www.aarst.org/key\\_radonscience\\_speakers](http://www.aarst.org/key_radonscience_speakers).

If you have additional questions or requests for coordinating with AARST during National Radon Action Month, please send an email to: [director@aarst.com](mailto:director@aarst.com).

## Reaching Out to Physicians and Pediatricians

Nikolas Webster, of New York State's (NYS) Bureau of Environmental Radiation Protection at the New York State Department of Health (DOH), initiated an innovative program for National Radon Action Month. He began a program for doctors dedicated to raising radon awareness among family physicians and pediatricians. He wanted to reach areas that he and his staff are unable to personally visit. He believes that if the importance of radon safety is communicated in a face-to-face manner by a scientific source within the community, the message will be more likely to get across to community members.

In June of 2007, Nikolas began collecting contact information for physicians in high risk counties by utilizing a database within the NYS DOH Website. He developed a NYS DOH tri-fold brochure highlighting the risks of radon exposure. He then wrote a cover letter to physicians, asking if they would be interested in his National Radon Action Month program which is trying to increase public awareness. In early December 2007, he and several voluntary staff members in his office began to mail out over 3,000 thousand packets containing the physicians guide, the NYS DOH tri-fold, an application for a test kit, and the letter.

About a week and a half after the letter went out, he started getting responses, and was invited to give a talk about radon at St. Clare's Medical hospital in Schenectady County in April, 2008. During the talk he asked physicians if they ever talked about radon with their patients, and he provided examples to emphasize that patients would be more likely to take the risks of radon exposure seriously if the information was delivered directly by their doctor, rather than via a pamphlet. His talk drew the Director of Family Medicine at the hospital, who was interested in continuing to reach out to and inform new residents. The Director and Nikolas are currently trying to schedule a yearly presentation for all new residents of the hospital.

Nikolas' talk was also effective in another way; people in the community were responsive. His office received many calls asking questions about radon and test kits. When asked where they received their information, callers let him know they had received it from their doctor. He cited one woman in particular as an example, who requested a kit and found radon levels of over 100 pCi/L in her home, far above the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L. She subsequently ordered two more test kits to confirm her results, and then had her home mitigated. Taking it one step further, she contacted her children's school to see if they would test for radon—demonstrating how one person can affect a whole community.

Since January 2008, he has kept in contact with the doctors, asking them to update their contact information and checking to see if they would like more application packets. Instrumental to the success of this project was the tracking and evaluation of how many packets were sent out, and the results that came back. The radon test kit applications sent back into the office had been assigned a special code so they were able to be tracked.

For January 2009, Nikolas plans to continue with the projects from National Radon Action Month 2008, and to look for more avenues to reach even more physicians and pediatricians in a face-to-face capacity by attending local county chapter meetings of physicians' professional organizations. He would also like to try to involve counties who receive money through State Indoor Radon Grants to expand his efforts, and to engage local county officials to generate proclamations to stress the importance of radon risk and testing.

Nikolas offers two key suggestions for anyone interested in implementing similar projects:

- ▶ Allow a sufficient amount of time if you plan to make your own information packets.
- ▶ Get out into the field and interface directly with people because personal interaction is a more effective way of delivering your message.

The following link provides a PDF version of the NYS DOH tri-fold brochure: <http://www.health.state.ny.us/publications/3168.pdf> (English/Spanish).

## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

### 3. Take Your Message to the Community

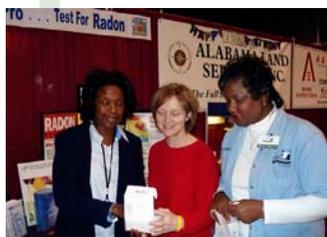
#### Arrange a Display at Local Sporting Events

Set up a booth or display near a concession stand or ticket window and distribute radon educational materials and test kit coupons. Work with the sporting venue to show radon Public Service Announcements (PSAs) during half-time or other breaks in play. Visit [www.epapsa.com](http://www.epapsa.com) to view and order the PSAs.



#### Display Radon Information at Public Gathering Places

Libraries, community centers, malls, and transit centers frequented by members of your community are perfect locations to provide radon education and testing materials. Supply these locations with radon materials and ask them to display the materials in a prominent location. Be sure to check back with these locations frequently and provide them with additional materials if necessary.



#### Provide Radon Education at Home and Garden Events

Incorporate radon resistant construction techniques into special events with a home and garden theme. Groups have promoted National Radon Action Month at a green house or eco-house exhibit at state fairs, green building shows, lawn and patio, and landscape shows. Work with exhibit organizers to provide outreach and educational materials for visitors.

#### Coordinate with Welcome Wagon or Other New Home Programs

Your community may have a welcome wagon or other programs to welcome new residents. Provide these programs with brochures and test kit coupons to include with welcome packages for new residents. Be sure to include information about your coalition or program so that individuals can follow up with you if they have questions.

#### Use Direct Mail Effectively

Bring your radon message directly to people's homes. Send test kit coupons to new parents or radon brochures to new homeowners in your community. Target your list of names to the groups you most want to reach and design attractive materials to attract their attention.

### 4. Reach Children and their Families

#### Hold a Radon Poster Contest and Awards Ceremony



A radon poster contest is held each year during radon testing season. Start early and work with your local school(s) to get students to design radon posters. For more information on the radon poster contest, visit [www.sosradon.org](http://www.sosradon.org).

#### Provide Creative Radon Education Programs

Involve science students in conducting radon measurements. Sponsor educational events in 4 H or other special classes. Offer incentives such as t-shirts or parties for participating. Contact school leaders in your community to arrange special radon events for students.

#### Host a Community Baby Shower

Many communities conduct community baby showers or other events for new or expectant mothers. This is a perfect opportunity to provide families in your community with information about a variety of health topics, including the importance of testing for radon. Provide educational materials and a test kit coupon to all attendees.

#### Conduct a Radon Test Challenge

Challenges are a fun way to encourage testing within your community. Contact a radon test kit manufacturer (a list can be obtained from your state radon office) to obtain test kits, possibly at a discounted price, and offer a challenge and "reward" for the most test kits distributed, conducted, and sent to the lab for analysis. Challenges can be conducted between cities (have your mayor challenge a neighboring community) or within your community (have schools in your community challenge each other). However you conduct your challenge, offer a "reward" for the challenge winner, but also acknowledge all participants. Check your state laws on contests before planning your radon test challenge.

## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

### 5. Work with the Media to Promote Radon Awareness

#### Promote Radon Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

EPA has a variety of print, radio, and television PSAs available at no cost to educate your community about the dangers of radon and the importance of radon testing. Hand delivering PSAs to your local media outlets is an effective way to reach large portions of your community, and often stations will run PSAs for free! Partnering with your local movie theater provides another opportunity to showcase the radon PSAs before the feature film. Lastly, consider contacting your state broadcast association for help in getting the PSAs aired. Keep in mind that people in your community may speak languages other than English, so be sure to use EPA's bi-lingual materials and reach out to media outlets that serve non-English speaking audiences. Visit [www.epapsa.com](http://www.epapsa.com) to view and order PSA materials.

#### Make Your Own Radon PSA

You can also create your own local radon PSA. Local news celebrities like meteorologists, radio personalities, and sports anchors will sometimes record PSAs about a worthy cause at their own facilities as a public service. Approach the advertising department of local TV and radio stations to ask if their broadcast personalities could record a short radon announcement for the station to air throughout the radon testing season.

Once a local station has agreed to record the PSA with their talent and dedicate airtime to the PSA, write a short script for the PSA. It should be brief, containing local references and key radon messages. Work with the station's advertising department to make sure that your script's length matches the available free airtime slot (i.e., 15 to 30 seconds).

Tailor the PSA script to match the type of local celebrity you've secured. For instance, for a local sports anchor in Chicago, your script might look like this:

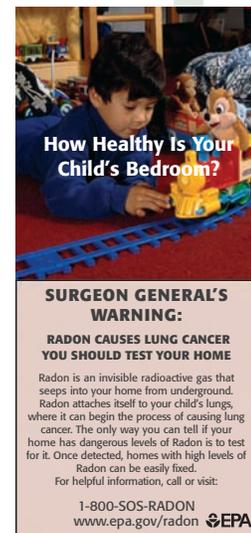
*Hey Bears fans! Winter is time for playoffs, but it's also the best time to test your home for radon. Radon is a naturally occurring gas that can build up to a dangerous level in your home. It can cause lung cancer, and it causes about 20,000 deaths each year. Buy a radon test kit at a hardware store today and make sure you're not at risk. Visit [your website] or call 555-555-5555 for more information.*

#### Conduct a Media Campaign

In addition to promoting PSAs, contact your local media and ask them to run stories on radon during the radon testing season. Provide the media with fact sheets and other background materials and offer spokespeople for interviews. See page 21 of this Event Planning Kit for information on working with the media.

#### Develop a Compelling Local Story

Give radon a face in your community. Invite the media to talk with people who have tested their homes and successfully mitigated a radon problem. Providing the media with local radon data (available from your state radon program or testing companies) will also help you localize the story for your community. Don't forget to provide information on test kit availability and qualified radon mitigation professionals in your community.



### Radon Action Week

Radon Action Week is typically the third full week in October. Consider ways to use both October and January to full advantage in support of your radon outreach efforts to the public and the media. You can use much of the information presented in this kit not only for National Radon Action Month but also Radon Action Week and year-round.

## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

### **Identify Key Spokespeople in Your Community**

Spokespeople can serve as recognizable and respected “faces” for your radon program. Perhaps you can engage local politicians, celebrities, scientists, or others that people in your community recognize and trust. Use your spokespeople for media interviews and to publicize your radon activities. Encourage your spokespeople to publicly test their homes for radon and publicize their results and subsequent actions if their tests show radon in excess of EPA’s action level. You can also contact your state radon program to help identify radon technical experts if needed.

### **Write a Press Release**

Write a press release about radon and your radon activities and distribute it to your local media outlets. A sample press release that you can customize for your community is included in this Event Planning Kit on pages 26-27.

### **Write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor**

Write a letter to the editor of your local paper(s) to educate your community about the health risks of radon and to encourage people to test their homes. Tips for writing an op-ed and letter to the editor and a sample op-ed that you can customize for your community are located on pages 28-29.

## **Media and Mini-Grants Raise Radon Awareness**

To have a far reaching impact during 2008’s National Radon Action Month, Steve Melia, from the Wyoming Department of Health, focused his activities around a media outreach campaign, along with the distribution of free, short-term radon test kits. Steve began by calling radio stations and requesting short interviews to explain the dangers of radon. While on the radio shows, he was able to inform the public that the state was offering free test kits throughout January in honor of National Radon Action Month. The local CBS television station and several radio stations aired the interviews multiple times and broadcasted stories about radon during the month of January.

Using the Internet as another outreach medium, Steve placed a radon link on the Wyoming Department of Health’s Home Page to provide easy access to the Radon Web page containing a downloadable coupon for a free radon test kit. Members of the public could print out and mail in the coupon to receive their kit. As well as working with television, radio, and Internet, Steve also coordinated with the Governor’s office to release a Governor’s Proclamation for National Radon Action Month, as well as the Department’s Public Information Office to issue several press releases.

The roughly 100 to 150 postal requests per day (totaling more than 4,000 requests) for a radon test kit reveal the community’s overwhelmingly positive response to the campaign.

Taking his outreach campaign one step further, Steve made several mini-grants available to Wyoming science teachers to conduct radon projects with their science classes. He hopes to attract further media coverage to help spread his message about radon and the importance of radon testing.

Wyoming’s National Radon Action Month 2008 Press Release is available at:  
<http://wdh.state.wy.us/news.aspx?NewsID=140>.

## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

### 6. Put Radon Awareness to Work

During National Radon Action Month, you can play an important part in raising awareness in the workplace and promoting testing for radon among your colleagues by conducting a radon awareness and testing campaign in your workplace.

#### Get Employees' Attention

##### Through Email and Websites:

- ▶ Send an email message explaining radon and the risk of radon-induced lung cancer, and ask your employees to test their homes and mitigate their homes if radon is detected above the EPA action level. In the email, you may refer them to Websites where they can get more information about radon and reducing their risk from radon, such as your organization's Website, your state radon or public health Website, and the EPA's radon Website at [www.epa.gov/radon/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/index.html).
- ▶ Create a worksite radon testing campaign Web page on your intranet. This would contain links to the EPA's radon Website, company events you have planned that are related to the campaign or local community radon events, information on where employees can obtain test kits, and recognition of action being taken as a result of your campaign (i.e., a goal tracker showing how many in your company have tested their homes for radon to date).

##### In Common Areas:

- ▶ Create flyers and hang them in high-traffic areas (e.g., kitchen, hallways, employee lounge, storeroom) to publicize the campaign.
- ▶ Host a breakfast or lunch where an employee volunteer, a Human Resources representative, or a community/state expert presents the basic risks of radon and what action can be taken to reduce the risk of radon. Use EPA's National Radon Action Month PowerPoint presentation template to create your presentation. Then, distribute EPA's fact sheets for audience members to take home. Consider customizing the PowerPoint, factsheets, and other resources in the Event Planning Kit to the audience and your organization by editing content, adding your organization's logo, personalizing contact information, and more. This could be combined with other health promotion initiatives taking place in your workplace.
- ▶ If your company has any smoking cessation effort, make sure to include information on radon and the higher associated risks of cancer for smokers.

#### Get Employees to Take Action

##### By Making it Easy:

- ▶ Consider including customized coupons for test kits in paycheck envelopes, paystubs, or mailboxes. Coupons can be customized with codes to track their use, providing you with results of your efforts. Your organization can obtain customizable radon test kit coupons at [www.sosradon.org](http://www.sosradon.org). For more information about the test kit coupon program, contact Bruce Snead ([bsnead@ksu.edu](mailto:bsnead@ksu.edu)) at 785-532-4992 or Brian Hanson ([bhanson@ksu.edu](mailto:bhanson@ksu.edu)) at 785-532-4996.

##### By Motivating:

- ▶ Set a workplace-wide goal of having x% of employees test their homes. Encourage competition (inter-office, inter-group, or even an inter-office-floor contest) competition for the highest number of tested homes.

## Ideas for Radon Outreach Activities *(continued)*

- ▶ Motivate employees by recognizing their efforts and offering prizes for participation. For example, you could offer a complimentary radon mitigation if a home tests above the EPA action level (consider partnering with a local mitigator at [www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html) to possibly offset the cost of the mitigation). “Green” or “healthy home” products such as non-toxic cleaning products, window sealing kits, energy saving light bulbs, or other practical products are also good prizes.

### By Making it Fun

- ▶ Ask parents in your workplace to get their children involved by participating in the National Radon Poster Contest for children ages 9-14. This contest asks children to create a poster portraying radon hazards and safety, and is held annually to generate interest, enthusiasm, and action about radon safety and to increase the number of homes tested for radon.

### Get the Word Out

#### Through the Media:

- ▶ Publicize your efforts by writing a press release or letter to the editor of a local newspaper, explaining your workplace’s initiative and the results of your collective efforts. Sample press releases and letters are available in the Event Planning Kit.

#### Through EPA:

- ▶ View the activities in your state on EPA’s Activities Web page at [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/activities.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/activities.html) and on [www.radonleaders.org/nram/events](http://www.radonleaders.org/nram/events). Then share your workplace activities and events by filling out the online Activity Submittal Form at [www.radonleaders.org/nram/addevent](http://www.radonleaders.org/nram/addevent).
- ▶ Share your efforts and the results of your workplace activities with the radon community nationwide by completing the online Feedback Form after National Radon Action Month. Your efforts may be recognized in the National Radon Action Month newsletter or Website!

## Piloting New Methods to Reach Employees

For John Hultquist and David Neville of the Utah Division of Radiation Control, the key to a successful 2008 National Radon Action Month involved brainstorming in unique ways to inform employees about radon testing. John and David realized in January that the text block on their paystubs could be used for messages, so they sent a message about radon testing (including details about kit purchasing) to the payroll department and asked to have it placed into the state employees’ pay stubs. Because of the positive response from state employees, John and David also decided that January would be the right time to devise a way for all people to be informed about radon test kits. John and David contacted the Public Information Officer to set up a link on the State’s Department of Health Web page where employees and the general public could go to request a radon test kit. The Web page resulted in 131 requests for test kits. The Department of Facilities Construction and Management also helped spread the word by distributing radon posters to building facility coordinators to place on bulletin boards. The Utah Division of Radon Control also worked with local television stations to run stories throughout January on the risks of radon and issued a press release in an effort to launch a successful media outreach campaign. The Division also collaborated with the Utah Safety Council. The media outreach and collaboration with the Utah Safety Council resulted in 2,851 unique visitors to the Utah Division’s Website, and a sale of 1,700 radon test kits to Utah citizens in January of 2008.

For more information on Utah’s radon efforts, visit [www.radon.utah.gov/index.htm](http://www.radon.utah.gov/index.htm).

## 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 Website.
- ▶ # 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](http://www.nram.cadmusweb.com) to publicize your event on the National Radon Action Month Website.
- ▶ **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](mailto:bsnead@ksu.edu)) at 785-532-4992 or Brian Hanson ([bhanson@ksu.edu](mailto: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 <http://epa.gov/radon/whereyoulive.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](http://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.

# Radon Poster Contest

## Tips

**Raise awareness about radon and recognize poster contest winners by hosting an awards ceremony for your state or local poster contest winners. An awards ceremony reaches families, motivates children, and offers a compelling story for the media. The following tips provide guidance for holding a successful awards ceremony.**

- ▶ Grants up to \$1,000 are available (as funds allow) for every state, territory, and tribal nation that has a radon poster contest.
- ▶ Conduct your radon poster contest during the time period specified in the contest guidelines at [www.sosradon.org](http://www.sosradon.org). Consider hosting the awards ceremony in conjunction with National Radon Action Month.
- ▶ Once the posters have been judged, confirm the availability of key individuals. Invite poster contest winners, parents, teachers, principals, and government officials, and obtain permission from parents for the use of their children's photos.
- ▶ Secure a location, such as a school auditorium or city hall, for hosting the event.
- ▶ Arrange travel and special activities for the winners, such as a tour of state capital and meetings with officials.
- ▶ Notify local and state press about the event and prepare photos of the winning posters for the media. See the Media Outreach section on page 21 for more tips on reaching out to the media.
- ▶ Arrange event logistics. There are numerous details to consider for a successful awards ceremony. Some to consider include: send invitations; create certificates or plaques for the winners, prepare speakers; write a program; hire a photographer; prepare the posters to be displayed, and assemble a press kit to give to any media that attend the event.



If you would like more information on planning and implementing a radon poster contest awards ceremony, please contact Bruce Snead ([bsnead@ksu.edu](mailto:bsnead@ksu.edu)) at 785-532-4992 or Brian Hanson ([bhanson@ksu.edu](mailto:bhanson@ksu.edu)) at 785-532-4996 to receive a copy of the Poster Contest Awards Ceremony Toolkit on CD-Rom."

# Radon Communication

## Tips

The following tips will help you develop radon messages and materials that will appeal to your audience.

- ▶ **Be accurate:** Scientific accuracy is vital to your program's credibility and will help you achieve desired outcomes. Using EPA's key messages will help you ensure that you are communicating the most accurate, up-to-date radon information. Please see Basic Radon Facts on page 17 for EPA's key messages. You can also visit [www.epa.gov/radon](http://www.epa.gov/radon) for additional radon information.
- ▶ **Be credible:** Recent EPA market research revealed that many Americans respond more favorably to messages about radon when they are delivered by credible sources. This research informed EPA's PSA campaign promoting the Surgeon General's warning about radon and lung cancer. (Visit [www.epapsa.com](http://www.epapsa.com) for more information about radon PSAs.) Other familiar experts in your community can also be highly effective when communicating about radon. Think about credible sources including celebrities, government officials, health professionals, and other individuals or organizations who can effectively deliver radon messages in your community.
- ▶ **Be clear:** Keep it simple. Clear messages for lay audiences contain as few technical and scientific terms as possible. Eliminate any information that the audience does not need in order to take action against radon.
- ▶ **Be consistent:** Messages and graphics should reinforce each other, not send different signals. Make sure your messages and graphics are consistent across all your communications.
- ▶ **Be relevant to your audience:** One size does not fit all. Consider the needs of your different audiences when disseminating messages and materials. For example, if you are conducting outreach in a county with a large Spanish-speaking population, try to provide Spanish materials. See page 19 for a Basic Radon Fact Sheet in Spanish.
- ▶ When conducting outreach to families with young children, you may want to combine radon messages with information about other children's health issues that your organization addresses. Children's Health Month in October would be an ideal time to bundle radon messages with other children's health issues like asthma or lead.

### Helpful Resources

EPA offers the following tools to help you create your National Radon Action Month messages and materials:

- ▶ **Templates:** To get started on your materials, use EPA's templates including a customizable fact sheet available at [www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/nram/basic\\_radon\\_fact\\_sheet.doc](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/nram/basic_radon_fact_sheet.doc).
- ▶ **Boilerplate messages:** Use the boilerplate National Radon Action Month messages on page 16 for your Website or print materials.
- ▶ **Graphics:** National Radon Action Month graphics are available for you to use for a variety of materials. Visit [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/event\\_kit.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/event_kit.html) to download Web and print versions of the National Radon Action Month banner which appears in this Kit.

# Web Communication

## Tips

If you use the Web to communicate with your audience, make sure to include information about National Radon Action Month. Link to EPA's National Radon Action Month public Website page. It is designed for individuals who would like to know more about how they can take action during National Radon Action Month: [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html).

You can also create your own National Radon Action Month page on your Website. Here are some tips and tools for creating a Web page dedicated to National Radon Action Month:

- ▶ Use EPA's National Radon Action Month Website as a model for creating your own Web page: [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html).
- ▶ Use the boilerplate National Radon Action Month messages provided on page 16 of this Event Planning Kit. Also make sure to include local radon statistics and information on National Radon Action Month events and activities in your state.
- ▶ Use EPA's National Radon Action Month graphics for your Website. Web graphics are available for download at [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/event\\_kit.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/event_kit.html).

### Basic Website Tips

Whether you are updating your radon Website or adding some new information on National Radon Action Month, these basic guidelines will help you create appealing Website content:

- ▶ Create content that is accurate, credible, consistent, and clear.
- ▶ Design pages with a clean and consistent design (e.g., a simple background, legible type, a few carefully selected colors, predictable headers).
- ▶ Utilize bullets to highlight main points and steer clear of large text blocks. Use plenty of white space to give readers' eyes a break.
- ▶ Use captioned images that convey your message in graphical format.
- ▶ Use small graphic files to ensure fast display of pages.
- ▶ Make it easy for users to logically move from section to section with simple navigation tools (e.g., side or top bars).
- ▶ Track site usage and invite user response. Not only will you know more about activity on your site, but your users will feel more involved if given regular opportunities to submit comments.
- ▶ Visit [www.usability.gov](http://www.usability.gov) for more helpful tips on developing Website content.

### Making Radon Tests Easily Accessible

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services really took Missouri residents into account when it created a new online registration tool on its Website for residents to order a free radon test kit. In the fall of 2007, Carol Bell and her colleagues proposed this online registration system to ultimately save time and money that would otherwise be used to manually register citizens wishing to receive a radon test kit.

On January 1, 2008, just in time to promote the new service available to Missouri residents during National Radon Action Month, the online registration tool was made available. Registration numbers were low for the first few days, but increased throughout the month as more citizens became aware they could request a radon test kit in such a convenient manner. Visit this site to register: [http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Radon/FreeTestKit\\_Registration.html](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Radon/FreeTestKit_Registration.html).

Missouri received an overwhelmingly positive response to this new on-line registration system. During the first six months of 2008, Missouri had a 300% increase in requests for radon test kits compared to the same period last year, and the state processed over 6,000 online requests.

With the state and other support, Carol and her team provided enough radon test kits and educational materials to meet the overwhelming demand at no cost to Missouri residents. By creating an online registration system for radon test kits, Carol successfully utilized a new tool to reach out to the community and make an impact lasting well beyond National Radon Action Month.

# National Radon Action Month

## Messages

The brief messages below are designed to help you communicate with the public and stakeholders about National Radon Action Month. You can use this language for your Website, newsletters, flyers, and other materials. Feel free to customize the messages to suit your communication goals.

### Consumer Message

You can use the following message to encourage individuals in your community to take action against radon during National Radon Action Month.

#### January is National Radon Action Month

##### ***Test Your Home. Protect Your Health.***

During January's National Radon Action Month, the U.S. Surgeon General and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) urge all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes for radon. Radon is a natural radioactive gas that you can't see, smell, or taste but could be present at a dangerous level in your home. As the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the U.S. and the first leading cause among non-smokers, radon claims more than 20,000 lives annually. If a high radon level is detected in your home, you can take steps to fix it to protect yourself and your family. For more information about what you can do to protect your health and take action against radon during National Radon Action Month, please visit [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/public.html).

#### Basic Radon Facts

Radon fact sheets in English and Spanish are provided in this Kit. You can use the PDF versions on pages 17-20 to disseminate to your audience or you can add your own logo and contact information to the customizable English version available at: [www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/nram/basic\\_radon\\_fact\\_sheet.doc](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/nram/basic_radon_fact_sheet.doc).

### Stakeholder Message

As part of your radon outreach activities, you may want to encourage other stakeholders to get involved in efforts to increase radon outreach in January. The following message can be used to promote National Radon Action Month to a wide range of community partners and other radon stakeholders.

#### January is National Radon Action Month

##### ***Join the Effort to Prevent Lung Cancer Deaths from Radon***

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated January as National Radon Action Month. In January, communities lead activities and host special events to raise awareness of the health effects of radon exposure, promote testing and mitigation, and advance the use of radon resistant new construction. Join the national outreach efforts today and help prevent thousands of lung cancer deaths from radon! EPA offers free tips and tools to help you plan and implement radon outreach activities in your community. Visit [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/partners.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/partners.html) to learn more about how you can get involved.

# Radon Facts

## Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil, and water from the natural decay of uranium. While levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, radon can accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. You can't see, smell, or taste it, but an elevated radon level in your home may be affecting the health of your family.

Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the country each year. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. If you smoke and your home has radon, your risk of lung cancer can be higher.



## Radon is found all over the United States.

Radon has been found in elevated levels in homes in every state. No area of the country is free from risk. Indeed, two homes right next to each other can have vastly different radon levels. Just because your neighbor's house does not have an elevated level of radon does not mean that your house will have a low radon level. The only way to know if your home is under the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L is to test.

High levels of radon in homes usually come from the surrounding soil. Radon gas enters through cracks and openings—such as sump pump lids and plumbing features—on the lower levels of your home. Hot spots include basements, first-floor rooms, and garages, but radon can be found anywhere in your house.

## You should test for radon.

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that all homes in the U.S. be tested for radon. Testing your house for radon is easy to do. If your house has a radon problem, you can take steps to fix it to protect yourself and your family.

## How to Obtain Radon Test Kits

To obtain an easy-to-use radon test kit, you can:

- ▶ Purchase a test kit from your local home improvement or hardware store. Many kits are priced under \$25.00.
- ▶ For information on obtaining test kits and test kit coupons, visit [www.sosradon.org](http://www.sosradon.org).
- ▶ Contact your state radon program, details available at <http://epa.gov/radon/whereyoulive.html>, for more information about obtaining test kits from your state or from a radon testing company or laboratory in your area.

You can find out if your home has an elevated radon level by conducting a simple test. If the results of the short-term test (less than 90 days) are at or above 4 pCi/l a follow-up test should be conducted to be sure. If the radon test is part of a real estate transaction and results are needed quickly, the averaged results of two short-term tests can be used in deciding whether to mitigate. For more information, visit [epa.gov/radon](http://epa.gov/radon).

Radon test kits are available at your local home improvement or hardware store, or in some cases from your state radon office. You can also order

## Basic Radon Facts *(continued)*

them from Kansas State University (KSU) or radon testing companies. Another option is to hire a qualified tester to do a radon test for you. Contact your state radon office about obtaining a list of qualified testers. Information about testing your home for radon and finding a test kit is also available by calling 1-800-SOS-RADON.

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), a measurement of radioactivity. EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that homes with radon levels at 4 pCi/L or higher should be fixed. EPA also recommends that Americans consider fixing their homes for radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L. Based on a national residential radon survey completed in 1991, the average indoor radon level is about 1.3 pCi/L in the United States. The average outdoor level is about 0.4 pCi/L.



### **You can fix a radon problem.**

The cost of making repairs to reduce the radon level depends on several factors, including how your home was built. Most homes can be fixed for about the same cost as other common home repairs, like painting or having a new hot water heater installed. Look in your local phone book or call your state radon office to locate radon mitigators in your area if you find an elevated radon level in your home.

### **New homes can be built with radon-resistant features.**

Radon-resistant construction methods can be effective in reducing radon entry. When used properly, these simple and cost-effective techniques can help reduce the accumulation of radon gas in homes.

Every new home should be tested after occupancy, even if it was built using radon-resistant construction methods. If radon levels above EPA's action level at or above 4 pCi/L are detected, it is easier and less expensive to reduce radon levels in homes that have been built with radon-resistant construction techniques.

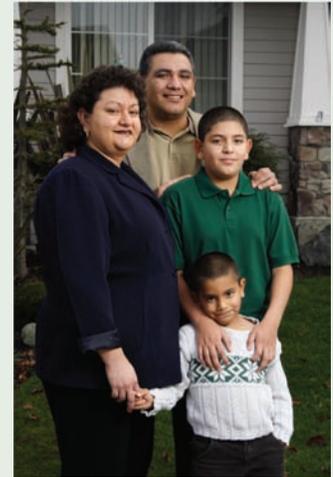
***Radon presents a serious health risk, but it can be controlled easily and cost-effectively. Take action today. Encourage your friends and family members to do the same!***

# Hoja de datos sobre el radón

## El radón es un gas radiactivo que causa cáncer.

El radón es un gas radiactivo que proviene de la descomposición natural del uranio un elemento que está presente en las rocas, el suelo y el agua. Los niveles de radón al aire libre representan un riesgo mínimo para la salud humana, sin embargo este puede acumularse en el interior de cualquier edificio hasta alcanzar niveles perjudiciales para la salud. Usted no puede verlo, olerlo ni probarlo, pero cuando su nivel es elevado dentro del hogar, puede afectar a la salud de toda su familia.

La exposición al radón es la segunda causa principal de cáncer pulmonar en los Estados Unidos y la principal en las personas que no fuman. De acuerdo con la Agencia de Protección Ambiental (EPA, por sus siglas en inglés) de los EE.UU. el radón es el causante de más de 20,000 muertes anuales en el país. Solamente el fumar causa más muertes debido al cáncer pulmonar. El riesgo de contraer este tipo de cáncer es mayor si usted es un fumador y si hay niveles altos de radón en su hogar.



## El radón se puede encontrar por todo los Estados Unidos.

En todos los estados se han encontrado hogares con niveles elevados de radón. No hay un área que esté exenta de riesgo. La única manera de saber si el nivel de radón en su hogar está dentro de los límites establecidos por la EPA, o sea 4 pCi/L, es haciendo la prueba para detectarlo.

Los niveles altos de radón que se encuentran en los hogares usualmente provienen del suelo de los alrededores. El radón penetra a los pisos más bajos de su hogar a través de grietas y aperturas tales como tapas de pozo de sumidero, y cañerías. Aunque el radón se puede encontrar en cualquier parte de su hogar los lugares más propensos son el sótano, los cuartos del primer piso, y los garajes.

## Cómo obtener el kit de las pruebas de radón

Para obtener un kit o paquete de las pruebas de radón, usted puede:

- ▶ Comprar el kit o paquete en la ferretería de su localidad. Muchos de estos kits generalmente cuestan menos de \$25.00.
- ▶ Para obtener información adicional de cómo hacer la prueba en su hogar, visite la página del web [www.sosradon.org](http://www.sosradon.org).
- ▶ Comunicarse con el programa de radón de su estado para obtener más información sobre cómo obtener la prueba de detección de radón. Vea más detalles en la página web en <http://epa.gov/radon/wherelive.html>.

## Usted debe hacer la prueba de radón.

El Cirujano General de los EE.UU. recomienda que se haga la prueba de radón en todos los hogares, la cual es fácil de hacer. Si usted tiene problemas de radón en su hogar, puede tomar medidas para su propia protección y la de su familia.

Con una simple prueba de detección de radón usted puede saber si en su hogar hay niveles de radón elevados.

## Hoja de datos sobre el radón *(continued)*

Usted mismo puede hacer la prueba o contratar una persona calificada en radón para que la haga por usted. La oficina a cargo del programa de radón en su estado le puede proveer una lista de personas calificadas en radón y en algunos casos el kit o paquete con la prueba.

También puede pedir la prueba de Kansas State University (KSU).

El radón se mide en unidades de picocuries por litro (pCi/L) de aire, que es una medida de radiactividad. La EPA y los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC, por sus siglas en inglés) recomiendan reducir los niveles de radón en los hogares que tengan una concentración de 4 pCi/L o más. La EPA también recomienda que se reduzcan los niveles de radón entre 2 pCi/L y 4 pCi/L.

### **Usted puede solucionar el problema de radón.**

El costo de las reparaciones para reducir la concentración de radón en su vivienda depende de varios factores, incluyendo la manera en que fue construida. En la mayoría de los hogares el problema se puede resolver por una cantidad de dinero similar a la que costaría pintar la vivienda o instalar un sistema de agua caliente nuevo (calentador de agua). Para localizar los contratistas calificados busque en la guía telefónica local o comuníquese con el programa de detección de radón de su estado.



### **Las casas nuevas pueden ser construidas con características resistentes al radón.**

Utilizar técnicas de construcción resistentes al radón puede ser un método efectivo para prevenir que este gas entre en las casas. Cuando estas técnicas simples y de bajo costo se aplican apropiadamente pueden reducir el nivel de radón acumulado en los hogares.

Aunque se hayan utilizado técnicas resistentes al radón al momento de la construcción después de mudarse a una casa nueva usted debe hacer la prueba de radón. Si los niveles de concentración de radón son iguales o superiores a los 4 pCi/L recomendados por la EPA, será más fácil reducirlos si se emplearon técnicas de construcción resistentes al radón.

**El radón representa un riesgo muy serio para la salud, pero puede ser controlado fácilmente y a bajo costo. Tome medidas hoy mismo. ¡Anime a sus amistades y familiares para que hagan lo mismo!**

# Media Outreach

## Tips

**A successful media outreach approach can increase the success of your event. The following tips will help you capture media attention for your radon activity, event, or program.**

### **Tell the radon story.**

The best way to gain the media's attention is to provide facts about the dangers of radon to public health. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, second only to smoking, and radon exposure is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

- ▶ Remember to involve the media in all radon-related activities, such as testing demonstrations and poster contests.
- ▶ Invite the media to talk with people who have tested their homes for radon and successfully mitigated the radon problem, or whose homes were built radon-resistant.
- ▶ Arrange for interviews with doctors and other respected experts and spokespeople who can discuss the dangers of radon and steps to mitigate health risks.
- ▶ Plan a press conference at an "on-the-scene" location, such as at a home that will be tested for radon to demonstrate how easy it is to test and to provide the media with a visual for publicizing the issue.

Once you have designed an interesting event, there are a few general steps you can follow to ensure that you get the best coverage possible.

Please see pages 23-24 for more specific ideas on telling the radon story in your community.

### **Build successful relationships with the media.**

- ▶ Establish a list of national and local media, taking note of beat reporters. Beat reporters are assigned to a specific area or topic, such as community health and science.
- ▶ Contact beat reporters and editors to introduce yourself and to establish a point of contact for information.
- ▶ Think of reporters as avenues for getting radon information to the public.

### **Start with a good media list.**

**A good list is one that is relevant.** In choosing whom to approach, it is important to consider who is likely to want to tell your radon story, as well as whom you would like to do it. You may want to include small newspapers and community newsletters in addition to major newspapers and television

and radio stations. While you want to cast a broad net, you do not want to waste time and resources with media outlets or reporters who are not right for the event.

At major newspapers and television and radio stations, in most cases, it is appropriate to contact the assignment desk or assignment editor. The assignment editor will usually give you the name and contact information for the beat reporter who covers topics related to radon.

In radio, you should contact the news director. Your local library may have a media guide listing names and addresses of the people you may want to contact. You can usually get this information from the Website of the radio station as well. Be sure to get your contact's email address. Many reporters prefer to get releases and other background materials by email rather than hard copy.

Please see page 24 for a list of relevant media outlets to consider.

**A good list is an accurate list.** Once you have developed a list of potential contacts to target, double check that list for accuracy by calling the publication or station. Call the main number to make sure the person you have selected to contact is still in that position, and that the contact information you have is accurate.

### **Write a good pitch letter.**

After you have a targeted list of reporters and editors, you'll need to write a pitch letter. The pitch letter alerts editors and reporters to your story and tells them why they should cover radon issues. Please see page 23 for tips on writing a pitch letter.

### **Write a press release.**

A well written press release can yield more media coverage than any amount of advertising could bring to radon. Please see pages 26-27 for press release tips and a sample press release.

### **Write an op-ed or letter to the editor.**

Publications' opinion sections are another great place to promote radon awareness. Author an op-ed describing your experience with radon and encourage others in the community to conduct radon tests. Writing an op-ed

introduces the publication's readership to radon, puts a local angle on the issue, and helps readers learn what they can do to prevent exposure to radon. If the publication has written about radon or related topics recently, you can respond to the article with a letter to the editor. Please see pages 28-29 for a sample op-ed.

### Develop a media kit.

Make it as easy as possible for the media to do their jobs. Provide them with statistical information about radon from reputable sources and provide simple graphics if you have them. Anything you can do to make it easy for reporters to write a story will help. Put together a media kit with a full range of information about radon issues, testing and mitigation, radon-resistant new construction, and the specifics of your radon event. A media kit can include the following materials:

- ▶ Pitch letter
- ▶ Press release\*
- ▶ Radon fact sheet\*
- ▶ Radon materials order form\*
- ▶ Biography or background information of speakers and experts available to talk about radon issues
- ▶ Proclamation\*
- ▶ Calendar of events
- ▶ List of radon kit manufacturers and laboratories and their toll-free numbers
- ▶ List of local stores that carry radon kits, complete with contact information
- ▶ Your contact information
- ▶ State radon program contact information
- ▶ Website addresses as appropriate

### Follow up.

You've sent your materials out to the reporters and editors on your list and allowed time for them to look over the information. Now it's time to make follow-up calls. During your follow-up calls, you should:

- ▶ **Be prepared.** Make notes for your calls and be prepared to take notes during the calls. Plan what you are going to say ahead of time and stick to it. Try to anticipate any questions or objections you might hear and have an answer prepared. Always remind the media that radon is a serious health risk that is easy to overlook because it is an odorless, invisible, and tasteless killer. Also remember to send the message that radon testing and mitigation is convenient and cost-effective.
- ▶ **Be polite and brief.** Editors and reporters are usually on a very tight schedule and they will appreciate it if you get right to the point. Identify yourself, tell them why you are calling, and offer to answer any questions they may have.
- ▶ **Ask for coverage.** After you have confirmed receipt of your letter and answered any questions, ask for coverage of your event.

\*Samples of these materials are included in this Event Planning Kit.

## Remember these points.

**Timing is everything.** Consider the editor's schedule when you place your calls. Newspapers are usually working on a mid-afternoon deadline for the next day, so late afternoon is the best time to call. Call the staff of noon news programs after 3:00 p.m. and call the evening news in the morning.

**More than one call may be required.** This is especially true with television stations. Often the assignments for a given day are not made until that morning. The station's ability to send a crew to your event can be affected by other events taking place that day. If a media outlet has expressed interest in covering your event but has not committed to it, call on the day of the event and ask again for their coverage and remind them of the details.

**Don't get discouraged.** You are competing against other story ideas and current events. You might feel as though you are getting the run-around. It's possible that one person will tell you to speak to another or to call back at another time. If so, follow their directions. It is also possible that people will be short with you because they are busy. The best strategy is to be courteous, helpful, creative, and most of all, persistent. Remember that the media needs news to fill their programs and newspapers. Let them know why your story is worthy and make it as easy as you can for them to cover your issue and events.

**Reporters may not attend your press conference as a matter of policy.** This is where personal relationships help in convincing them to make an exception. However, if a reporter tells you in advance that he or she will not be able to make it to your press conference, send them a press release anyway and encourage them to use the information to build a story with their own sources. Determine the point of contact reporters may attempt to call for additional information and discuss with these individuals the importance of providing a clear message that emphasizes the health risks and the opportunities for managing the risks. The best way to establish good relationships with the media is to offer them opportunities for interesting and newsworthy stories. Offer a hard-to-get interview, local human interest stories, eye-catching visuals or pictures, and good audio for those in radio news. Always present your information as something that readers, listeners, and viewers deserve to learn.

## Telling Your Radon Story

### How to Pitch a Story

Pitching a news story to a reporter, editor, or producer can seem intimidating, but it is not difficult if you prepare yourself adequately. The most effective way to contact the media with a story idea is through a “pitch letter,” which provides the reporter or media with all the information they need to pursue the story.

Use the following tips to write a good pitch letter:

1. Email is often the best way to get your letter in front of the right person. Plan to follow up your email with a timely phone call.
2. Keep it short. Journalists don't have much time to spend each day reading pitches. Begin your pitch with your most compelling information to grab the reader's interest, and explain the story in just a few paragraphs. If you have a news peg (see below), make it clear at the beginning of the letter.
3. Provide all the information journalists need to cover the story. Make sure your pitch covers the “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How” of the story. Include your contact information, list possible sources, and include any relevant background material. If you have written a press release, paste that into the email.
4. If you are pitching a broadcast outlet, remember that they are interested in gathering video footage. Tell them about possible photo-ops or events.

### News Pegs

Journalists often look for “news pegs,” which make a discussion of a broad issue relevant to the moment and “newsworthy.” When trying to obtain coverage of radon issues, look for news pegs and point them out to the media when you speak to them. News pegs can be breaking news, or a simple event that brings a story into focus or makes it more timely. Below are some possible radon-related news pegs that can help frame other media pitches and guide your discussions with reporters.

- ▶ January is National Radon Action Month! This “month” is a great reason to promote radon awareness, and reporters will use that information to guide their coverage. Why is January a good time to take action against radon? Because it's an ideal month to test for radon in your home.
- ▶ Death of someone from lung cancer that was thought to be radon-related.
- ▶ Any speech, rally, event, or meeting can be an opportunity to involve the press.
- ▶ Any national coverage of radon, cancer-causing agents, or other health/air-quality disaster can be an opportunity

to remind readers that people can be exposed to a high level of radon every day, without knowing it. Local outlets look for ways to make national stories more relevant to local readers.

- ▶ Adoption of a radon resistant new construction code.

### Radon Story Pitches

Here are some ideas for pitching the radon story to your local health, parenting, real estate, government, and other media outlets.

***Nonsmokers Are at Risk for Lung Cancer*** – Although many people may be concerned about cancer prevention, nonsmokers may think they are not at risk for lung cancer. Is there someone in your area that has been diagnosed with lung cancer but never smoked? Work with local cancer advocacy groups to identify potential interviewees who would be willing to tell their stories. Tell the media about your spokesperson's life, battles, and provide tips on testing for and reducing radon levels in homes and other buildings.

***Pitch to: Health outlets***

***Preventing Radon Exposure Can Help Prolong Your Life*** – Longevity is a popular consumer theme that can be leveraged to tell the radon story. Like diet, sleep, and exercise, having a healthy home and preventing radon exposure can have a positive effect on long-term health. This story would be particularly appealing to publications promoting natural health/lifestyles. ***Pitch to: Health outlets***

***Prevent Radon for Healthier Homes*** – Because most people spend so much time inside, homes typically account for a major share of exposures to toxics that are harmful for families. Unlike other environmental hazards like lead paint, mold, moisture, and pests, you can't see or smell radon. Radon is a preventable health threat in the home. ***Pitch to: Health, parenting, home/real estate outlets***

***Getting Your Home Ready for Winter*** – When a home is closed up during cooler weather months, radon can soar to a harmful level. Winter is usually an ideal time to test a home for radon. Editors may be interested in including this information in tips, columns, or articles about getting one's home ready for the winter. ***Pitch to: Home/real estate outlets***

***Child-Proofing Your Home*** – Radon is often an overlooked health threat for parents who are concerned about creating a safe environment for their infants and children. Babies and children spend most of their time indoors and they are especially vulnerable to environmental health threats. Editors may wish to include information about the dangers of radon into stories about baby/child-proofing or tips for home health and safety. ***Pitch to: Parenting outlets***

**Radon Testing in Action** – If a well-known local business, organization, or government official is going to conduct a radon test, make it a media event. Invite the local press to observe the test beginning, and have officials and sources available for comment on the importance and ease of radon testing. When the test results are ready, invite the media back for an announcement of the results.

**Pitch to:** *Local government, health outlets*

**Personal Story** – Did you test your home for radon as part of National Radon Action Month? Whether the test revealed an elevated level or not, offer to tell your story to the media. Remind them that you tested as part of National Radon Action Month, and describe why you tested. Did you do it for your children? Do you know someone who had lung cancer? How are you taking action to fix your home if radon is present? A compelling, emotional angle to radon coverage helps put a human face on the issue. **Pitch to:** *Health, home/real estate, parenting outlets*

## Media Outlets

Consider the following outlets for pitching your local radon story.

### Health

- ▶ Local newspaper health reporter/health department
- ▶ Health producer at local news station
- ▶ Health reporter/producer at radio station
- ▶ Hospital medical newsletters
- ▶ Natural health publications
- ▶ Local retiree/senior publications
- ▶ To find other local health publications, reach out to your local hospital, clinic, gyms, and nursing/senior homes to see what publications they subscribe to or stock in their lobbies.

### Children/Parenting

- ▶ Local newspaper education/youth reporter
- ▶ Newspaper columnists who write on parenting/children's issues
- ▶ Local newspaper's "Kids" section
- ▶ News desk at a local TV or radio station
- ▶ Local parenting magazines
- ▶ School newsletters
- ▶ To find publications in your area that focus on children's issues or parenting, reach out to your school board. Ask if they circulate newsletters to which you could contribute an article.

### Home/Real Estate

- ▶ Real estate reporter/section of local newspaper
- ▶ Real estate listings magazines
- ▶ Local construction, real estate, or broker trade publications
- ▶ Local decorating/architecture/home and garden magazines

- ▶ If you're having trouble locating local real estate publications, reach out to a real estate professional and ask what publications they read or advertise in.

### Local Government

- ▶ Metro section or local government reporters and columnists at newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations
- ▶ Local government Website (city, county, state)
- ▶ Online bulletin boards for your neighborhood or town

### Other Local Outlets

- ▶ Local consumer magazines like *The Virginian*, *The Washingtonian*, *Cleveland Magazine*.
- ▶ Local blogs are a top source for area outreach. Try to find a blog dedicated to covering local news, parenting, or local politics for radon outreach.
- ▶ Does your area include Hispanic or Asian media? Don't forget to reach out to Spanish-language or other media targeted toward an ethnic or non-English-speaking demographic.
- ▶ If there is a university or college in your area, contact their student newspaper(s).
- ▶ Cable channels and public broadcasting often offer a variety of local home, parenting, or news programs that might be amenable to a discussion on radon.
- ▶ Check talk radio listings for similar local programming options.
- ▶ If you don't get much response from local newspapers or broadcast outlets, try contacting their Web page staff. Often, outlets employ reporters for Web-only content.

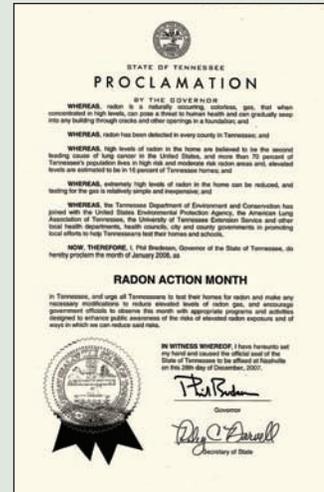
## Reaching Out to Non-Traditional Radon Stakeholders

Amy Inabinet of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) wanted to try something different in 2008 to promote National Radon Action Month. Knowing that many homes throughout Tennessee still needed to be tested for radon, and that most people receive an electric bill every month, Amy reached out to 20 electric utility cooperatives in smaller counties, hoping they might incorporate radon messages into their customer communications. She sent them a variety of basic radon information and images allowing the cooperatives to choose formats best suited for delivery along with their particular customer bills or newsletters.

*Tennessee Magazine*, with a subscriber base of 770,000, highlighted Amy's efforts with the cooperatives in their January 2008 issue, which led to an overwhelming response of nearly 4,000 requests for free radon test kits—nearly six times the number of requests received for the entire year of 2007! Requests were received from 90 of 95 Tennessee counties, demonstrating the reach of the article and Amy's other outreach efforts.

To continue building awareness about radon and radon testing throughout the year, Amy helped coordinate a highly publicized Governor's Proclamation for National Radon Action month. She and her colleagues also created a tri-fold brochure offering information on the dangers of radon and free test kits to be distributed at conferences around the state, as well as to non-traditional radon stakeholders, including rural health associations and the Tennessee Bee Keepers.

TDEC is also working to expand a program they implemented with the Department of Health during the 2008 National Radon Action Month. The Department of Health periodically offers "exchange stations" where mercury thermometers can be exchanged for digital thermometers. During National Radon Action Month, TDEC partnered with the Department of Health to offer radon test kits at these exchange stations. TDEC and the Department of Health are now working to establish a pilot project to have kits offered at the exchange on a regular basis.



**Sample**

# Press Release

Send a press release to the media to announce your radon campaign and increase your community's awareness of radon issues. A well written press release can yield more media coverage than any amount of advertising. Here are a few steps to take to ensure you get the coverage you deserve.

- ▶ Keep your press release concise. Reporters and editors don't have time to read through lots of text. Your press release should be no longer than one page and should focus on the facts and the call to action for your community.
- ▶ Grab their attention. At the upper left-hand margin, just under your letterhead, you should have the words "For Immediate Release" in bold, capital letters.
- ▶ Make it easy for them to learn more. Somewhere near the top of the page, list your contact information including your name, title, telephone numbers, fax number, and email address. Also, indicate if you have health or other experts on hand to provide interviews.
- ▶ Include a headline such as "Health Risks in Our Community: How You Can Protect Your Family".
- ▶ Include a dateline or the city and state from which the press release is issued.
- ▶ Craft a lead paragraph. The first paragraph should grab the reader's attention and contain relevant information, such as the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) if you're publicizing an upcoming event.



The sample release on the next page can serve as a guide for creating your own. Be sure to time the release during or near National Radon Action Month. Or, if your radon campaign activities will occur during an alternate time, send this out to fit your schedule. Print the letter on your organization's stationary and fill in local information where **[indicated]**. You may also wish to tailor this release to announce a special event, press conference, or other local campaign activity. See the Media Outreach Tips section on page 21 of this Kit for more information about working with the media.

## Sample Press Release *(continued)*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Point of contact's name and phone number]

### PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH IN THEIR HOMES RADON – A SILENT KILLER

#### Citizens Urged to Test Homes for Radon, the Second Leading Cause of Lung Cancer in U.S.

[Your city, state, date] — [Organization] is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a nationwide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families. In our community, [organization] is conducting [briefly describe local radon action activities] during National Radon Action Month in January.

Radon is present at elevated levels in about [X]% of [area] homes (info available from your state radon office). Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air, but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Radon is the leading second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. "However," says [spokesperson] from [organization] "because you can't see or smell radon, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes."

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores or directly from radon testing companies. Many are priced under \$25.00. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs such as painting or having a new water heater installed.

[Organization] urges [community] residents to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. Radon poses a serious threat to our community's health but there is a straightforward solution. For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction, call [organization] at [organization's phone number] or visit our Website at [organization's Website], or visit EPA's National Radon Action Month Website at [www.epa.gov/radon/nram](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram).

## Sample

## Op-Ed and Letter

## to the Editor

**Write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor**

A well-written op-ed or letter to the editor can raise awareness in your community by helping readers understand what they can do to prevent exposure to radon. Write an op-ed when you want to introduce radon issues to your community and/or describe a personal experience with radon. An op-ed is your opinion and should be written to grab the reader's attention and deliver an accurate message. Op-eds can vary in length between 400-750 words long. You can write a letter to the editor when you want to respond to the publication's coverage of radon or add a different perspective on related topics. A letter to the editor is shorter than an op-ed, usually 150-200 words. Here are some tips on submitting an op-ed or letter to the editor:

- ▶ Personalize your submission. It will be more compelling to the editors and the readers if your submission resonates with your community.
- ▶ Include your contact information when submitting your op-ed or letter—include your address, phone number, and email.
- ▶ Initially, send your op-ed or letter to just your first choice publication. Wait a few days after submission and follow up with a phone call to gauge interest. If the publication has decided not to run your op-ed or letter, go ahead and submit it to another publication.
- ▶ Always follow-up with a phone call a few days after submitting your op-ed or letter. If your writing is rejected, ask editors what was lacking in your piece so that you can revise or be better prepared for the next submission opportunity.

The following letter to the editor is an example of how you can respond to a publication's coverage of relevant topics in order to highlight your radon message. The op-ed on page 29 can be used as a template and you can personalize your own introduction.

**Sample Letter to the Editor**

Dear Editor,

Thank you for notifying the community about the threat of asbestos near the site of the demolished paint plant ("Asbestos Poses Threat," January 21). However, your article failed to note that our area is already at a high risk for cancer caused by a dangerous gas.

Townsville is described by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as an at-risk area for elevated radon levels. Radon is a gas that can seep into buildings from the earth, accumulate, and pose a substantial health risk. It is estimated that 20,000 people die in the U.S. each year from radon-related cancer.

Easy, inexpensive testing options are available for homes and businesses to see if you are at risk. While high-profile health risks are certainly big news, please continue to educate the community on the easily preventable risk of living with prolonged radon exposure.

My organization will be holding an event on January 30 at the Marie Williams Community Center to promote awareness of this serious threat, and we will be offering coupons for reduced priced radon test kits.

Thank you,

Jane Doe  
Radon Campaign Organizer

## Sample Op-ed *(continued)*

### **TOO MANY THINGS THREATEN OUR HEALTH — DON'T LET RADON TAKE ITS TOLL**

#### **Intro Example One (Individual):**

As a man in his late 40s, it seems like there's always some new threat to my health. High blood pressure, heart disease, and prostate problems have begun to plague my friends and colleagues. Luckily, one health threat in our community is easy to detect and reduce exposure: Radon.

#### **Intro Example Two (Organization):**

Seatbelts. Sunscreen. Low-sodium diets. There are many actions that we can take to stay safe and healthy. Some of them, like cutting back on chocolate cake and carefree days under the sun, require a little bit of sacrifice. Others, like quitting smoking, can require a huge amount of effort. But there's one big action we can take to help protect our health that requires very little effort or sacrifice: radon testing.

#### **Body:**

Radon exposure kills an estimated 20,000 people in the U.S. each year—a number that could be dramatically reduced by easy, inexpensive home testing and repair.

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas that can accumulate in your home and can cause cancer in you and your children. Radon usually comes from the surrounding soil and can enter through cracks and openings on the lower levels of your home.

Many people don't know about radon because you can't see, smell, or taste it. But exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Although lung cancer can be treated, the survival rate is one of the lowest for those with cancer.

Radon levels vary around the country, but no home is free from risk. The only way to know if you are at risk for radon exposure is to test your home. Conducting a radon test is as easy as opening a package, placing the detector in a designated area, and after a set number of days, sending the detector back to the lab for analysis. Many kits are available at your local hardware store for under \$25. If your home does have an elevated level of radon, a qualified radon mitigation contractor can make repairs to solve the problem and protect your family.

The U.S. Surgeon General recognizes radon as a health risk and recommends that all homes across the country be tested for radon. Testing your home, and making repairs if necessary, is a small price to pay for the health of your loved ones. The world is full of unknowns and potential hazards like radon, but thankfully, we can eliminate it before it can hurt us. Life is short enough—don't let something as easy to fix as radon make it even shorter.

## 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](http://www.epa.gov/radon), on your Website.
- ▶ 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](http://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.

Sample

# Letter

## to Government Official

[Date]

[The Honorable and full name of official]  
[Address of official]

Dear [Title (e.g., Senator, Mayor, Governor) and last name]:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated January as National Radon Action Month. **Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer** among non-smokers, responsible for more than **20,000 deaths annually** in the United States alone. *[If available, add local facts about radon].* In support of this effort, I am writing to ask you to help us raise awareness about radon risk in our state this January, which will help save lives throughout the year.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil, and water that can accumulate to dangerous levels inside homes, schools, and other buildings. It cannot be seen, and has no odor; the only way a family can know if their house has a radon problem is if they test for it. The good news is that radon problems can be fixed. Getting the word out to your constituents about the importance of testing for radon and fixing a radon problem can **save lives** in our state/communities.

Here are four important **actions you can take** to get the word out about radon and save lives in our community:

- ▶ **Proclaim January as National Radon Action Month** in our state/community and hold a proclamation signing ceremony with key health officials, community activists, and the press (see sample proclamation page XX);
- ▶ **Use your Website** to let your constituents know January is National Radon Action Month. Provide a link to EPA's radon page and use the National Radon Month web banners available online at [www.epa.gov/radon](http://www.epa.gov/radon), feature National Radon Action Month activities planned in our state and highlight our state's winner of the National Radon Poster Contest at [www.sosradon.org](http://www.sosradon.org).
- ▶ **Conduct an interview with local media** – in addition to traditional radio, television, and print media, consider podcasts or other emerging media;
- ▶ **Attend a local radon event** – See [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/activities.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/activities.html) to find events in our area to promote radon awareness in our state/community.

With your leadership we can prevent lung cancer deaths in our community by educating the public about the danger of radon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Name]  
[Organization]  
[Phone Number/Email Address]

# Proclamation Letter to Government Official

[Date]

[The Honorable and full name of official]  
[Title of official]  
[Address of official]

Dear [Honorific and name]:

I am writing to request that you proclaim the month of January as Radon Action Month in [county/city/town and/or state]. Your proclamation would be in conjunction with other cities and states around the country who, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are taking the lead in observing National Radon Action Month.

In [area], radon is present at elevated levels in about [X]% of homes (information available from your state radon office).

One in 15 homes across the United States has elevated radon levels. With more than 20,000 deaths each year, radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers. In light of these concerns, the EPA has designated January as National Radon Action Month. During National Radon Action Month, [organization name], in conjunction with EPA, will strengthen our efforts to educate the public about the dangers of radon and what can be done to minimize the health risk from exposure to elevated levels of indoor radon. As part of our education efforts we will: [insert activities].

I have enclosed a fact sheet that will give you more information about the dangers of exposure to indoor radon. I have also taken the liberty of drafting a sample proclamation for your consideration. We would be truly honored to have your support. Please contact me if you require any additional information. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

[Your name]  
[Title]  
[Organization]  
[Phone number/Email address]

YOUR CITY, COUNTY, OR STATE



YOUR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE

**[County Executive's, Mayor's, Governor's] Proclamation In Support of  
Radon Action Month in [County, City, and/or State]**

WHEREAS, radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas that threatens the health of our citizens;

WHEREAS, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers;

WHEREAS, one in 15 homes across the U.S. has an elevated radon level;

WHEREAS, any home in [community] may have an elevated level of radon, even if other homes in the same neighborhood do not;

WHEREAS, testing for radon is simple and inexpensive;

WHEREAS, identified radon problems can be fixed;

WHEREAS, [your organization] and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are supporting efforts to encourage Americans to test their homes for radon, mitigate elevated levels of radon, and build new homes with radon-resistant materials and features.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [name], [title] of [county, city, and/or state] do hereby proclaim:

JANUARY [Dates], [Year]  
Official Radon Action Month  
In [County, City, and/or State]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this [date] day of [month], in the year [year].

(Signature of Official)

# Radon Materials

## Order Form

EPA has both print and electronic materials available to you at no-cost. Some materials have limited quantities. Make sure you get your materials requests in early so you have your materials for National Radon Action Month.

### Publication



#### Breathing Easy: *What Home Buyers and Sellers Should Know About Radon*

This short, educational video covers how to address radon in residential real estate transactions. The primary audiences are home buyers and sellers, real estate sales agents, and brokers. Home inspectors, mortgage lenders, other real estate practitioners, and radon services providers will also find the video helpful. This publication is available in VHS, CD and DVD. [EPA 402-V-02-003 (TRT 13.10)]



#### Building Radon Out: A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Build Radon-Resistant Homes

This 81-page, fully illustrated guide contains all the information you need to educate home builders about radon-resistant new construction (RRNC). [EPA 402-K-01-002, April 2001]

- PDF version: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/buildradonout.pdf>



#### Buying a New Home: *How to Protect Your Family From Radon*

This introductory brochure provides basic information on radon-resistant construction in new homes. [EPA 402-F-98-008, April 1998]

- HTML version: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/rnrc-tri.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/rnrc-tri.html)



#### A Citizen's Guide to Radon: *The guide to protecting yourself and your family from radon*

This recently revised guidance offers strategies for testing your home for radon and addresses what steps to take after you have tested, the risk of radon, and radon myths. [EPA 302-K-09/001, Revised January 2009]

- HTML version: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html)
- PDF version: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/citizensguide.pdf>



#### Consumer's Guide to Radon Reduction: *How to Fix Your Home*

This recently revised booklet is for people who have tested their home for radon and confirmed that they have elevated radon levels. [EPA 402/K-10/005, September 2010]

- HTML version: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/consguid.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/consguid.html)
- PDF version: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/consguid.pdf>



#### El Radón: *Guía para su protección y la de su familia*

"A Citizen's Guide to Radon" in Spanish. [EPA 402-K-93-005, September 1993]

- HTML version: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/elradon.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/elradon.html)

#### EPA Map of Radon Zones



The purpose of this map is to assist national, state, and local organizations to target their resources and to implement radon-resistant building codes. This map is not intended to be used to determine if a home in a given zone should be tested for radon. Homes with elevated levels of radon have been found in all three zones. All homes should be tested regardless of geographic location. [EPA 402-F-93-013]

- Print-quality versions in JPG and PDF: [www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/zonemap.html)



#### Guía del Radón para el Comprador y Vendedor de Viviendas

"Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon" in Spanish. [EPA 402-K-02-001, Julio de 2002]

- HTML version: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguidsp.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguidsp.html)
- PDF version: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/hmbyguidsp.pdf>

## Radon Materials Order Form *(continued)*

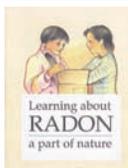
### Publication



#### Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon

This booklet is intended for anyone who is buying or selling a home, real estate and relocation professionals, home inspectors, and others. [EPA 402/K-09/002, January 2009]

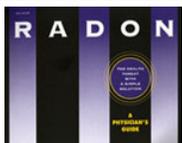
- HTML version: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguid.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/hmbyguid.html)
- PDF version: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/hmbyguid.pdf>



#### Learning About Radon A Part Of Nature

Written for Native Americans, this 18-page booklet discusses radon's place in the world, the basics on testing, and how homes can be fixed to reduce radon levels. [EPA 402-K-02-002, February 2002]

- PDF version: [http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/learning\\_about\\_radon.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/learning_about_radon.pdf)



#### Radon—A Physician's Guide: *The Health Threat With A Simple Solution*

This booklet enlists physicians in the national effort to inform the American public about the serious health risk posed by indoor radon gas. [EPA 402-K-93-008, September 1993]

- HTML version: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/physic.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/physic.html)

### Ordering Radon Materials

- EPA has a variety of print, radio, and television PSAs available in English and Spanish. View and order Radon PSAs at [www.epapsa.com](http://www.epapsa.com).
- EPA publishes a variety of documents in both print and electronic formats. Order materials online at [www.epa.gov/epahome/publications.htm](http://www.epa.gov/epahome/publications.htm).
- You may also order the EPA materials listed in the Event Planning Kit by contacting:  
National Service Center for Environmental Publications (NSCEP)  
Fax: (301) 604-3408  
Email: [nscep@bps-lmit.com](mailto:nscep@bps-lmit.com)  
Or by calling:  
(800) 490-9198 (Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. eastern time)

### For Further Information:

- Contact your state radon program director, available at <http://epa.gov/radon/wherelive.html>, to find out about additional radon materials to help you educate your community.