

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Serving Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma,
New Mexico, Texas and 66 Tribes

Helping Kids Learn in a Pollution Free Environment



January is National Radon Action Month, when the EPA joins with state, tribal and local public health agencies to encourage all Americans to test their homes for radon. Exposure to radon in indoor air is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Test your home and make 2022 a safer and healthier year.

January Is National Radon Action Month

Every year it is estimated that 21,000 Americans die from lung cancer due to home radon exposure. Testing your home is the only way to know if the radon level is safe or if it is greater than 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air or more. The U.S. Surgeon General and EPA recommend taking action to fix your home with a test result of 4 pCi/L or more. You should contact a qualified radon mitigation contractor for assistance with solving the problem.

Easy to use do-it-yourself radon test kits are affordable and available online and at many home improvement and hardware stores. You can also hire a qualified radon professional. Testing may show your home to have a high radon level. If so, a professionally installed radon reduction system, using a vent pipe and exhaust fan, will help prevent the radon from entering your home and will discharge it outside. When compared with risk

of lung cancer, these systems are very affordable, generally in the price range of many common home improvements.

www.epa.gov/radon/find-radon-test-kit-or-measurement-and-mitigation-professional

For more information, contact George Brozowski, Region 6 Health Physicist, brozowski.george@epa.gov.

February is National Pesticide Safety Education Month

During the month of February, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) celebrates National Pesticide Safety Education Month to raise awareness for pesticide safety education and share best practices for using pesticides safely in and around your home.

Reading the label every time you use a pesticide is key to ensuring you are using the pesticide correctly and keeping yourself and your family safe. EPA assesses the risks and benefits of all pesticides sold and distributed in the United States and requires instructions on each pesticide label for how to use the pesticide safely.

Here are tips to follow for all pesticides:

- Store pesticides in their original containers with proper labels.
- Store pesticides out of the reach of children and pets, preferably locked up.
- Use the amount specified on the label. Using more will not be more effective and may harm you, your loved ones and the environment.
- Wash hands with soap and water after using a pesticide. Wash clothes that have been in contact with pesticides immediately and separately from other items.
- Don't let children and pets enter sprayed areas while they are still wet.
- Keep pesticides away from food and dishes.



Learning Links—Learn More About Where You Live



Want to learn more about where you live? Do you ever wonder what businesses around you

are regulated by EPA? Do you worry about the air quality in your area? It is easy to find information. EPA has useful tools on its web page at www.epa.gov.

You can find out about your area, your state or any area in the United States. You can select your state from the drop down menu on the web page under My Community.

You can even search just in a zip code. It is as easy as could be. Spend some time on these pages and see what can be learned from them.

You will learn more about the world around you, in your back yard, or near your playground or campus.

The Region 6 state links are:

- Arkansas: www.epa.gov/ar
- Louisiana: www.epa.gov/la
- New Mexico: www.epa.gov/nm
- Oklahoma: www.epa.gov/ok
- Texas: www.epa.gov/tx



The Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) is available to answer questions from healthcare professionals, parents, school officials, or other community members about children's symptoms that may be related to environmental

Notes for Nurses—What Is the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit and Where Is It?

exposures. Areas of special interest include school environmental health, asthma, developmental disabilities, birth defects and community-based environmental justice concerns.

In the Southwest, the PEHSU is the [Southwest Center for Pediatric Environmental Health](http://www.swcpeh.org) (SWCPEH). It is one of ten PEHSUs in a network

of experts in children's environmental health located throughout the United States.

The SWCPEH serves the states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico out of its offices at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso, with consultants in all five states.

Pediatric environmental health includes creation of healthy environments for children and the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness due to exposures to environmental hazards of children before conception, during pregnancy, or at any time after birth and throughout childhood.



Custodian's Closet—Guidance from EPA on Schools and Covid-19



EPA's [coronavirus web area](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus) is EPA's main resource for guidance, resources, and frequently asked questions on COVID-19, as well as links to important information on COVID-19 from other federal agencies. The web area includes a variety of indoor air topics that will be helpful for schools including:

[Indoor Air and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus);

[Ventilation and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus);

[Air Cleaners, HVAC Filters and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus);

[Implementing a Layered Approach to Address COVID-19 in Public Indoor Spaces](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus); and

[Frequent Questions about Indoor Air and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus).

EPA also has a [factsheet](http://www.epa.gov/coronavirus) from April 2021 on cleaning and disinfecting best practices and tips you can use during the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance that the risk of catching COVID-19 by touching a contaminated surface is considered to be low.

Reducing Diesel Emissions from School Buses

School buses travel about four billion miles each year, providing the safest transportation to and from school for more than 25 million American children. However, diesel exhaust from these buses has a negative impact on human health, especially for children who have a faster breathing rate than adults and whose lungs are not yet fully developed.

While new buses must meet EPA's tougher emission standards, many older school buses continue to emit harmful diesel exhaust.

EPA's [Clean School Bus National Idle Reduction Campaign](#) is designed to help communities reduce emissions from older diesel school buses. School districts, fleet

owners and operators, bus drivers, parents and students all have a role in helping to reduce diesel emissions from school buses.

EPA offers funding, as appropriated annually by Congress, for projects that reduce emissions from existing diesel engines. EPA also provides information on strategies for reducing emissions

from older school buses. One of the easiest ways to reduce school bus emissions and save money is to reduce idling. Another effective method is to replace the oldest school buses in the fleet.



Why Green Your Sport?

Across the country, teams, fans, event planners and college campuses are saving energy, cutting waste and cleaning up at sporting events to show their commitment to the environment -- a goal that has many benefits.

The most basic reason to green sports is to help achieve [sustainability](#). Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and

maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.

Sustainability contributes to environmental benefits such as:

- Conserving natural resources helps to preserve biodiversity
- Protecting and improving air and water quality



- Reducing waste streams

Businesses can benefit directly by embracing greener practices and reducing waste:

- Social and environmental responsibility
- Reduce operating costs
- Decrease waste and disposal costs

Energy security

- Purchasing green power can help reduce America's dependence on foreign fuel sources because green power is a domestic energy source, whereas conventional power is in part produced from imported fossil fuels, such as petroleum or natural gas.
- Renewable fuels are inexhaustible and can be used so that fossil fuels are kept in reserve for times of need.

Tools to Reduce Waste in Schools



Schools accumulate tons of waste—from paper and computers to food and books. By learning how to properly handle this waste, school officials not only have an opportunity to greatly influence the future of their school, school district, and students, but they can also have a significant impact on the environment.

Every day, school officials struggle to find time to get everything done. To make waste reduction efforts and environmental protection feasible and practical for schools and school districts, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed an easy-to-use [Tools to Reduce Waste in Schools](#) guide to help schools and school districts implement

new or expand upon existing waste reduction programs.



EPA Region 6— South Central

1201 Elm Street, Ste. 500
Dallas, Texas 75270

EPA Region 6 Children's Health Team

Virginia Vietti, Children's Environmental Health
Coordinator
Vietti.virginia@epa.gov
214 665-7431

Cathy Gilmore, SEE for Healthy Schools
Newsletter
Gilmore.cathy@epa.gov
214 665-6574

How to Manage Asbestos in School Buildings

AHERA Designated Person Training Series

Hosted by the US Environmental
Protection Agency - AHERA Center for
Excellence

Sustainable Management of Food, Disposal of Batteries, Electronics, and Electronic Appliances and Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs:

Stephen Sturdivant, sturdivant.stephen@epa.gov, 214-665-6673

Recycling and Reuse: Deanna Debose, debose.deanna@epa.gov, 214-665-6461

Safer Choice and Wastewise: Melanie Lillard, lillard.melanie@epa.gov, 214-665-7588

Lead Based Paint: Mikeal Adams, adams.mikeal@epa.gov, 214-665-6711

Integrated Pest Management: Ken McPherson,
mcperson.kenneth@epa.gov, 214-665-6754

Pollution Prevention and Source Reduction Assistance Grant
Programs: Annette Smith, smith.annette@epa.gov, 214-665-2127

Radon, Asbestos, and Indoor Air Quality: George Brozowski,
brozowski.george@epa.gov, 214-665-8541

Ground Water: Scott Ellinger, ellinger.scott@epa.gov, 214-665-8408

Drinking Water: Angela Restivo, restivo.angela@epa.gov, 214-665-7123

Trash Free Waters: Rachel Renz and Renee Bellew,
renz.rachel@epa.gov and bellew.renee@epa.gov, 214-665-3129 and 214-665-2793, respectively.

PCBs: Anupa Ahuja, Ahuja.anupa@epa.gov, 214-665-2701

WaterSense: Debora Browning, browning.debora@epa.gov, 214-665-8025

Protecting human health and the
environment.

ODDS AND ENDS

Upcoming Newsletters

In our next issue, the
Region 6 Healthy Schools
Newsletter in March 2022
will highlight the following:

- Food Waste Recovery Month;
- Earth Day 2022; and
- Clean Air and Asthma Awareness Month,

Contacts

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Feedback

Louisiana, New Mexico,
Oklahoma, and Texas as
well as 66 Tribes. For
general information about
Healthy Schools, to provide
feedback on this
newsletter, or to be added
or removed from the
distribution list, please
contact Cathy Gilmore,
Senior Environmental
Employee (SEE) for
Healthy Schools at
Gilmore.cathy@epa.gov.

We would love your
Feedback on this
newsletter or suggestions
for future topics. Please
email EPA at
Gilmore.cathy@epa.gov.

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in addition to the quarterly
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