

Radon

What is radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas that is formed by the natural decay of uranium in rock, soil, and water. It can be found in all 50 states. Radon can only be detected through testing because it is colorless, odorless, and tasteless.

How radon enters a building

Radon gases come into a building from the rock and soil underneath it. Once inside a building, the radon can become trapped and concentrated. Radon may enter a building through:

- Cracks in floors and walls
- Gaps in suspended floors
- Openings around pumps and drains
- Cavities in walls
- Joints in construction materials
- Gaps around pipes and wires
- Crawl spaces that open directly into the building

Effects

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Radon does not cause any short-term effects such as shortness of breath, coughing, headaches, or fever.

Testing

On average, one out of every fifteen homes in the United States have radon problems. The EPA and the Surgeon General recommend testing for radon in all homes below the third floor. The Kansas City Health Department (816-513-6313) and the National Safety Council (800-767-7236) offer radon testing kits at a reduced cost.

How to reduce radon in the home

Lowering radon levels requires technical knowledge and special skills. A contractor who is trained to fix radon problems should be used.

Additional information

- http://safety.webfirst.com/ehc/radon/rad_faqs.htm
- Kansas City Health Department/Community Environmental Health Program – (816) 513-6313