

Should radon be tested in Western PA?

Western PA has a 58% failure rate. By comparison, nationally there is approximately a 15% failure rate. Our varied geology and high uranium content rocks make us a high risk area. As an interesting side note, the types of rocks that allow for Marcellus oil and gas are often very high in Uranium, which becomes the radon entering our homes.

Is radon really a health risk?

Simply put, it is the second leading cause of lung cancer after the voluntary cause of smoking.

So why test when purchasing a home?

It is a deadline and people tend to only do things when there is a deadline. It is also an opportunity to negotiate with current owners to participate in the cost of a remediation system. Conversely, if you wait until you are the seller and the next buyer has the test done, you could be the person contributing to the cost of radon mitigation...having already exposed yourself and family to the risks of high radon.



What are the economics of radon testing?

Cost of testing is usually about \$ 150.00. Cost to put the system to reduce radon usually runs \$ 800 to 1,200.00 Costs can be higher if crawl spaces and multi-levels of basement are involved.

Does radon ever change after testing?

Radon comes into a home because of the negative pressure that can occur in a home. Yes, changing the environment and level of radon can be the result of adding an addition, installing an interior French drain, changing the heating system, installing exhaust systems, changing windows and doors and other changes can affect radon levels in a home.

Are all radon test methods the same?



The DEP allows a deviation of 25%. What that means is that if you have a test result of 4.0 pCi/l, which is the lowest failing result, the actual reading could be +25% to -25% or between 3.0 pCi/l and 5.0 pCi/l. Continuous Monitors can usually provide the most information. These can reflect peaks or valleys related to weather and can indicate when closed house conditions are breached. Electrets do not indicate breaches in closed house conditions and Activated Carbon tests not only do not indicate breach conditions, but high moisture can affect their function. Alpha Track tests are 6 month tests utilizing "open house" conditions for sixth months. These are the best tests to determine the actual exposure of residents to radon.

How can I tell if my radon tester or mitigator has a valid license?

The PA DEP website has a page to validate licenses. It is not silly to check that site. This inspector has discovered both testers and mitigators operating without a license. One such individual had been on a major Realtor franchise preferred list. That particular incident was discovered when the radon test revealed that the level of the radon was over 30 pCi/l in a home with a mitigation system installed by that mitigator. That website can be found on links from our websites. That link is: http://www.dep.state.pa.us/brp/Radon_Division/Rn_Services_Directory/Directory_Mainpage.htm

If a system is installed, can we be sure that the radon is safe?

This has a surprising answer. Simply put, no! We have found improperly installed or modified so as to not operate. When a mitigator installs a system in PA, they are required to test the home for radon within 30 days of completion of the system. Due diligence starts with reviewing that test and make decisions based upon those results and the testing method.

