



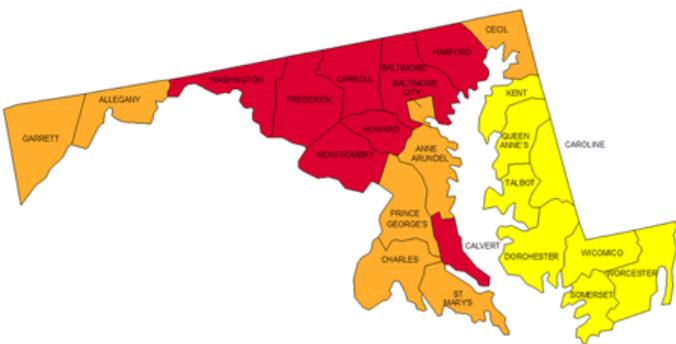
Everyone should test for Radon

When you scheduled your inspection, you were offered the option of a Radon test. This test would tell you whether the level of Radon gas in the home exceeded the current EPA actionable level of four picocuries per liter (4 pCi/L). If you chose not to have us perform the test, it is still highly recommended that you do your own test in the near future.

Why Test?

Radon is a colorless, tasteless and odorless gas produced by the decay of naturally occurring uranium in the soil. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer, causing an EPA-estimated 20,000 deaths per year. The risk is even higher among smokers.

One of the misconceptions about Radon levels is that anything below the “actionable” level of 4 pCi/L is “safe.” In fact, it is recommended that remediation be performed for any level exceeding 2 pCi/L. The average concentration of radon in outside air is 0.4 pCi/L.



Central Maryland lies within the EPA's “hot zone” for potential radon exposure.

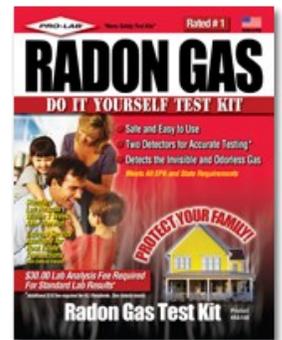
Central Maryland is in a “hot zone” for radon, which means that the geology of the area contains more of the quartz-rich igneous rocks that normally have higher concentrations of radioactive materials. In our own experience, about half of the tests we place come back with levels exceeding 4 pCi/L – sometimes much higher! We have seen local readings as high as 144 pCi/L.

Home Tests

While a test by a licensed lab is required for real estate transactions, it is quite simple to perform your own radon test. Kits are available from a multitude of sources and come in several different forms.

Short Term (Charcoal) Test

These are small plastic canisters that are placed in the lowest livable space of the home, usually for about 3 days. They are then sealed and mailed to a testing lab, which analyzes them for radon levels and emails the results. Test kits normally cost as little as \$15 and are available at hardware stores as well as online. These are a good “first pass” test, especially if you have not had a test done in the past, as they will identify serious problems quickly so necessary action can be taken. It is important that testing instructions are followed carefully to get the most accurate measurement.



Long Term (Alpha Track) Test

Even if your radon test comes back below actionable levels, it is a good idea to do periodic retests with long-term methods. These long-term tests use a different detection method, and are left in place for three months or longer. This type of test can be more accurate, as it is not as affected by short-term conditions such as extreme weather, which can skew a short-term test's results. Test kits normally cost around \$35.

