



# Radon in Minnesota

---

## Radon Basics

- Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that cannot be seen, tasted, or smelled. It is prevalent in many Minnesota soils and can enter any home that contacts the ground.
- When inhaled, it can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer. It is the primary cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers and the second-leading cause of lung cancer overall with approximately 21,000 deaths attributed to it every year in the US.

## Radon Risk in Minnesota

- Minnesota has a higher radon risk than almost every other state due to its geology and the way homes are built and operated in the state.
- All homes in Minnesota are at risk for high levels of radon regardless of age or location of the home.
- About 40% of radon tests in Minnesota homes are above the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level of 4.0 pCi/L.
- An estimated 500 - 700 radon-related lung cancer deaths occur each year in Minnesota. These deaths are entirely preventable by radon testing and mitigation.

## The MDH State Indoor Radon Grant (SIRG) Program

SIRG funds allow the MDH State Radon Program to conduct outreach, education and research that leads to over 20,000 radon tests and 2,000 mitigations annually in MN. Activities include:

- Providing 80 local partners with radon test kits and educational materials that they in turn provide to the public.
- Conducting continued training and education of approximately 114 private companies in Minnesota that provide radon testing and mitigation services, thus ensuring that the radon industry in Minnesota is technically proficient in testing and mitigating homes.
- Responding to thousands of questions about radon each year and providing technical consultation to: homeowners, contractors, realtors, schools, and builders individually and at various outreach events.
- Partnering with over one hundred builders in MN whom now offer fans to activate passive radon systems in new homes, which greatly reduce radon.
- Training over 1,300 real estate professionals this year, to assist them with the new radon in real estate awareness law.
- Conducting a healthy homes project targeting family child care, with 500 homes tested and radon mitigation systems being installed in 40 low-income homes.
- Researching radon levels in new homes built to the state code (§ 16B.61), and finding radon levels are above the EPA action level in about 20% of these homes.
- Evaluating the accuracy and precision of test kits distributed by MDH.

## Minnesota Laws Involving Radon

### Minnesota Statutes Ann. § 16B.61

Requires the state to incorporate into the state building code standards for radon-resistant new construction based on the International Residential Code Appendix F.

Minnesota Statutes Ann. § 123B.57

School districts must implement a health and safety program, including best practices for indoor air quality management, which should incorporate radon testing. School districts may use approved health and safety revenue for radon testing and mitigation of an elevated radon hazard.

Minnesota Statutes Ann. § 123B.571

Schools eligible for health and safety revenue that have chosen to test for radon must follow the state's radon testing plan and report results to the Minnesota Department of Health and at a school board meeting.

Minnesota Statutes Ann. § 13.381

Requires sellers of most residential real property to disclose radon testing and mitigation, provide a 'Radon Warning Statement' and provide the MDH 'Radon in Real Estate' publication to the buyer prior to signing a purchase agreement.

## **State Cancer Control Plan**

The Minnesota State Cancer Control Plan has 23 objectives, including a radon objective.

- Objective 8: Establish statewide policies that will result in levels of radon in new and existing homes that are as low as reasonably achievable.
  - Strategy 8.1 Incorporate the Minnesota Department of Health Gold Standard into current requirements for radon resistant new construction.
  - Strategy 8.2 Advocate for statewide policy requiring radon education and/or testing during residential real estate transactions.
  - Strategy 8.3 Educate stakeholders, including legislators, home builders, real estate agents and associated nonprofit agencies, about radon safety.

**For more information contact the Minnesota Department of Health Indoor Air Unit**

**Phone: 651-201-4618**

**Email: [health.indoorair@state.mn.us](mailto:health.indoorair@state.mn.us)**

**Web: [www.health.state.mn.us/radon](http://www.health.state.mn.us/radon)**