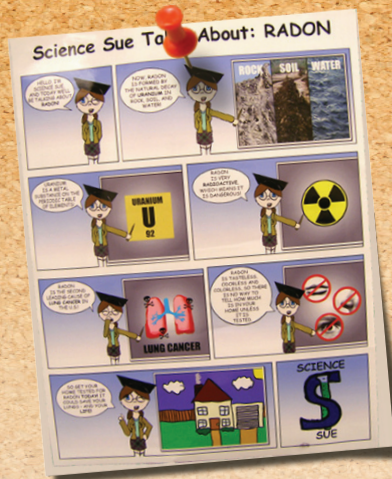




# National Radon Program Services

~Increasing public knowledge of radon and the need to test and fix homes



## NATIONAL RADON POSTER CONTEST OUTREACH KIT







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## Section 1 – Introduction and Contest Rules

### Introduction

**Thank you for your interest in the National Radon Poster Contest. Radon is a serious health risk facing tens of thousands of Americans.** Exposure to radon gas causes more than 20,000 deaths annually, and it is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. The challenge is that we can't see or smell radon. In fact, it's easy to forget that radon may be a problem in any home, school or building. The only way to know there's a radon problem is to test for it.

To engage students and other community leaders, such as parents and teachers, to raise awareness about radon and the need for more testing to help save lives, Kansas State University, through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), sponsor the annual National Radon Poster Contest. This is a great opportunity to build community support for radon risk-reduction through a fun, educational activity. Through participation in the National Radon Poster Contest, you can help entire communities understand the danger of radon and the need for action.

School communities can play a vital role in raising radon awareness. Not only will students be educated about radon and raise awareness through their artwork, but parents, teachers and other members of the community will become more informed about radon risk reduction. Your efforts are important, and K-State and EPA want to do what we can to make it easier for you. That is why we have developed this Poster Contest Planning Kit for your use.

You will find information and materials in this Kit that you can use to raise awareness through the National Radon Poster Contest. Use these resources to help promote the contest to teachers, parents and students in your area, and to help you capitalize on your poster contest success to yield community-wide progress toward reducing radon risk. The templates, examples and materials are designed to be customized, so please feel free to add or delete language, or — even better — create your own outreach projects using the National Radon Poster Contest!

**Visit [www.sosradon.org/poster-contest](http://www.sosradon.org/poster-contest) for information about participating in the National Radon Poster Contest, and for more tools to help you organize a local poster contest such as Artwork Submission Forms, entry reporting templates and checklists for planning award ceremonies.**

## Contest Rules

Eligibility Requirements: Children ages nine to 14 are eligible to participate in the contest. They can be enrolled in a public, private, territorial, tribal, U.S. Department of Defense or home school; enter through a sponsoring club, such as an art, computer or science club; belong to a scouting organization or a 4-H club.

The Prize: A trip to Washington, D.C. and recognition as a student leader raising radon awareness. The first, second and third place national winners, a parent and a teacher (or sponsoring organization's representative) for each place win an all-expenses paid trip to our nation's capital. They will participate in an awards ceremony during which the winning entry is unveiled. The poster will also be reproduced and distributed nationally to promote radon awareness.

### Artwork Requirements:

- Be original.
- Must not have student's name on the front.
- Should include a title on the front.
- The topic and title must be on the Artwork Submission Form (<http://sosradon.org/poster-contest/organizers#tools>).
- Must be submitted on white paper - 12 x 18 and 8.5 x 11 sizes are preferred, but all submission sizes will be accepted (preferred size eases reproducibility).
- Can be created with crayon, markers, paint (watercolor, tempera or acrylic), collage, photographs or computer graphics.
- Lettering and message should be large enough to reproduce well, with all pencil markings erased.
- Copyrighted characters (such as Snoopy), product logos and trademarked or brand names cannot be used.

### Reimbursement Funds for States, Territories and Tribal Nations

In order to encourage greater participation in the National Radon Poster Contest, Kansas State University is making available (as funds allow) up to \$1,000 for every state, territory and tribal nation that has a radon poster contest. Receipts and an invoice using a standard form are required to be submitted. This funding is to help off-set the costs of conducting the contest and holding an awards ceremony. Allowable expenses include:

- Postage for mailing out the contest brochures (K-State can provide brochures and labels for middle schools in every state and territory).
- Temporary help to prepare the brochures for mailing, following up with school districts and teachers, entering the posters into a database as they are received, and creating certificates for all students who enter the contest.
- Incentives for teachers and/or schools to participate (i.e., supplies to the school or teacher with the most entries).
- Certificates of Participation for each child, including envelopes and postage for the certificates.
- Plaques and/or gift certificates for winners.
- Refreshments for the awards ceremony.

If there are other costs that you would like to cover, or if you have any questions, please contact Bruce Snead at [bsnead@ksu.edu](mailto:bsnead@ksu.edu). Also, visit [www.sosradon.org/poster-contest](http://www.sosradon.org/poster-contest) for more contest information.

### How to Participate:

1. Students submit their eligible artwork to a sponsoring teacher, classroom leader or parent.
2. The sponsor completes the Artwork Submission Form for each student entry that they receive.
3. After completing the Artwork Submission Form, the sponsor submits the form and student artwork to one of the following locations:
  - If the student's state conducts a state-level contest, entries should be submitted to the state radon contest for judging and entry in the national contest. A map with contact information and other important information for states contest organizers can be found at <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest-contacts>.
  - If the student's state does not conduct a state-level contest, hard copy or electronic entries can be sent directly to Kansas State University:

#### Mailing Address

Attn: Bruce Snead  
National Radon Program Services  
2011 National Radon Poster Contest  
133 Ward Hall – Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS 66506-2508

#### Email

[radon@ksu.edu](mailto:radon@ksu.edu)

#### Submit Entries Online

<http://sosradon.org/poster-contest/entry-form>

### Contest Calendar:

- The contest officially opens on March 1.
- State and tribal level contest submission deadlines may vary. View state deadlines at <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest-contacts>, or contact your state radon program.
- The deadline for participants to submit entries directly to Kansas State University is October 31. Visit the website listed above for specific deadlines for your state, which may be earlier.
- State and tribal organizers should submit their top three winners to Kansas State University by November 15, for national judging.
- Notification of national winners will occur by December 1. State and tribal winners will be notified by December 15.

## Section 2 – Driving Entries

### ***Promoting the National Radon Poster Contest***

We're excited that your state, territory or tribal nation is interested in participating in the National Radon Poster Contest. The contest is an exciting opportunity to engage children ages nine to 14, parents and school staff to raise radon awareness within their communities in a creative and fun way.

#### ***Get to know your audience.***

Before promoting the contest, get to know your audience and how you can best reach out to them. Focus your outreach to students, parents, teachers and school administrators by promoting through some of the following avenues:

- Elementary and middle schools.
- Local community organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Club of America or the YMCA.
- Service organizations, such as the Girl Scouts of America or the Boy Scouts of America.
- Local art classes/schools.
- Local mentor/mentee programs, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Summer camps or after-school programs.

#### ***Get them involved.***

Now that you've identified your targeted audience, begin formulating how to best market your outreach. Make sure your promotions are clear and concise; highlight how to apply, key dates, the prize and why your audience should enter. Below are some promotion ideas to get your team started:


- Newsletters (online, Parent Teacher Organization newsletters, community, print, etc.).
- Direct mailers (flyers are available from Kansas State University at <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest/organizers#tools>).
- Flyers that can be posted in local community organizations and schools.
- Morning announcements to be played before school starts.
- Networking sites like Facebook and Twitter (see the Social Networking Tools and Ideas for more information).
- Local community calendars.
- Local blogs – specifically look into green living, parenting/kid blogs, teaching activities, etc.



### **Tips and Best Practices for Encouraging Entries**

The first step in coordinating a successful radon poster contest is getting the word out and encouraging students in your area to enter! The following tips can help you coordinate a successful radon poster contest in your community.

1. While sending direct mail flyers or brochures about the contest has been an effective way to drive entries, it is important to keep several tips in mind. First, if you don't personally know someone at the school, consider addressing your direct mailing to the school principal to allow them to determine the best person to receive the contest information (i.e., a science teacher or art teacher). Second, after conducting a direct flyer or brochure mailing, it may be helpful to call the school directly to confirm receipt and encourage school administrators to forward the information to the appropriate teachers.
2. Another effective method to engage schools is hand delivery of contest information to schools in your area. This is a great way to start the conversation about why the contest is an effective activity, and may give you the opportunity to speak directly with teachers who are interested in participating.
3. Teachers' organizations, such as the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, have many state and local chapters. Contact local chapters of these and similar organizations in your area to encourage them to forward information about the contest to their members as a fun, educational project for their students. Local school board associations are also excellent outlets for contest information.
4. Consider reaching out to students in your state or community who are home schooled. Many states and local areas have organizations to support parents who home school their children. These organizations often provide resources for parents, and host activities for home school students. These organizations are outlets to consider when disseminating poster contest information.
5. One way to encourage teachers to become involved is to offer a small prize for classroom supplies as an incentive (i.e., \$50 for the teacher in a school, district or state with the most entries). A competition between schools can also increase participation. For instance, the school with the most entries can receive art supplies, science equipment or other appropriate prizes. This type of competition can be coordinated with school administrators or principals to encourage participation.
6. Place announcements in the school Parent-Teacher Association's newsletters. Highlight that a parent and a teacher of the winning child at the national level will be able to accompany the child to Washington, D.C. Use the contest as an opportunity to encourage parents to talk about the issue of radon at home. Encourage them to test their homes, making it a family project.

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7. Place announcements about the contest in your public library. Children can enter on their own – not only through their schools. The libraries might even be willing to partner with you to create a Radon Awareness display with copies of the brochure. You can also use part of the \$1,000 reimbursement available to contest organizers (as funds allow) to make foam board displays about radon and the contest, which can be displayed in the libraries and other public spaces.
  8. If people hear about radon from more than one source, they are more likely to take action. If you are able to place radon Public Service Announcements in the local newspapers or have them aired on the radio or TV, then when they hear about the radon poster contest, it is more likely to have an impact.

### **Social Networking Tools and Ideas**

One effective way to spread the word and build momentum around the National Radon Poster Contest is to use your organization's social networking platforms. You can also leverage your relationships with other community clubs and organizations and encourage them to use the tools below to promote the contest.



**Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com))**

Facebook is the largest online social networking site, and provides a way to connect with supporters and people looking for information about your organization or department. You can create a profile, a fan page or a group for your organization to quickly distribute messages to followers about your projects, such as the National Radon Poster Contest. Or, you can post messages on pages of other organizations who may be interested in your projects.

### **Sample Posts:**

- Join kids from every state, territory and tribal nation in the National Radon Poster Contest. Learn more about the requirements and winning prizes at <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>.
- Hey, young artist! Submit your creative artwork for the National Radon Poster Contest. The winning prize is a trip to Washington D.C. Learn more at <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>.
- Looking for a fun, creative classroom activity? Have your students participate in the National Radon Poster Contest. The prize is a trip to Washington D.C. for the national winners and recognition as a student leader. Learn more: <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>.





## Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com))

Twitter is another social networking site that allows users to send and read brief messages called “tweets” (limited to 140 characters per message). By creating a Twitter feed, people who are interested in your organization or project can “follow” you to receive all of your messages. Twitter is a platform to make announcements, direct people to other online content, or interact with stakeholders who may be interested in your projects, such as the National Radon Poster Contest.

### Sample “Tweets”

- Join kids from across the U.S. in the National Radon Poster Contest. Learn more: <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>
- Calling all young artists! Compete in the National Radon Poster Contest: <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>
- Teach others about #radon. Compete in the National Radon Poster Contest: <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>
- So far we have XX entries for the (state) Radon Poster Contest. You should join, too: <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>
- Win a trip to Washington D.C. and be a student leader! Enter in the National Radon Poster Contest: <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>



## Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com))

Flickr is an online photo management and sharing platform. As a platform for the National Radon Poster Contest, it can allow you to display entries. You can recognize winners, or display all poster contest entries from your area!

### Flickr Ideas:

- Create a “Radon album;” fill it with past entries or winners from your area. Advertise it as a way to let people brainstorm their poster ideas.
- Post the current contest entries or winners on Flickr to recognize their work.
- Organize online voting to help determine local winners for the contest. This voting can be one among other factors to choose state winners.

**Hashtags (#)** are a way to link tweets on a particular topic so that others who are interested can find them. By simply adding # to your tweets on a particular topic, others will know to do the same and will create a database or community of users interested in the same topic. Twitter users can search for the hashtag and find all tweets on that subject.

Use these hashtags to follow and join the 2011 National Radon Poster Contest on Twitter:

- #nationalradoncontest
- #radonpostercontest
- #radon

### For example:

Teach others about #radon. Compete in the National Radon Poster Contest: <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest>

You can even create your own hashtag for you local Radon Poster Contest by simply adding a hash term to all of your contest tweets (ex. #nyradonpostercontest)!



## Blogging

Using your organization or department blog to promote the National Radon Poster Contest is a way to engage people who are already interested in the work of your organization. Blogs are an excellent venue to provide commentary on why the National Radon Poster Contest is an effective way to engage school communities in radon awareness and general indoor air quality awareness activities. For instance, use blogs to effectively relay past Radon Poster Contest success stories or recognize active school districts.

## Section 3 – Building on Success

### Recognizing Winners

Once you have generated radon awareness by conducting the radon poster contest in your area, there are several ways that you can continue the momentum. Enthusiasm generated by the contest can help you build support for your radon program and encourage more people to test for radon in their homes, schools and other buildings.

One of the most effective ways to continue the momentum from your radon poster contest is to recognize local winners! There are several ways to recognize your local, state, territory or tribal winners to help you continue to draw attention to the issue of radon. Planning these recognition activities during National Radon Action Month in January can even further highlight radon awareness!

1. Organize an award ceremony either on a local level, for instance at the school or mayor's office, or at a state level to heighten awareness of the contest and encourage future entries.
2. Display local winning posters publically to celebrate the winners and raise awareness. Posters can be displayed at City Hall, the State Capital or at community locations such as a local library or community center.
3. Encourage schools to display their radon poster contest entries and winning posters in the hallways and elsewhere such as in the school newsletter, newspaper, website, etc.
4. Work with the school's (or school district) multimedia office to interview their winner and produce a video or radio clip, or write-up the interview, to accompany display of the winning poster. See appendix for interview tips and sample questions.

### The Digital Press Release


Traditional press releases have been used by organizations to tell their story to the media in hopes that they would pass the information on to the general public. However, the growth of the internet enabled anyone to access information when and where they wanted. Because of this, organizations needed to find new ways for their information to stand out in front of the other information available on the internet. This led to the creation of the digital press release.

*The digital press release is an interactive press release or digital media kit that puts all required information in one place on the internet for the world to see. Digital press releases often include interviews, contact links, images, video, backgrounders, bios and other relevant information. These are posted online and are sent directly to the inbox of targeted reporters and bloggers. Digital press releases typically include resources to help reporters/bloggers research the story, such as:*

- *Keywords to help make the information easier to find in search engines.*
- *Hyperlinks to connect the press release information to the World Wide Web.*
- *Images, video, audio to capture the reader's attention.*
- *RSS Feeds to distribute news directly to people who want it.*
- *Social Bookmark tags to help make it easy for people to spread the news.*

Press releases are no longer just a way to deliver news to the media, but a way to deliver news to the world.



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5. Present each child who enters a poster with a Certificate of Participation. Certificates of Appreciation can be sent to teachers who work with their students to produce entries. Find a certificate template at <http://sosradon.org/poster-contest/organizers#recognition>.
  6. Reach out to local newspaper, radio or television outlets to alert them of state, territory, tribal or national winners from your area. Send out a press release, and invite these outlets to attend awards ceremonies for these winning students.
  7. Create brochures and flyers for next year's poster contest using the winning posters. National winning posters are used for national outreach, and the same can be done at the local level.
  8. Include announcements in local Parent-Teacher Association newsletters about winning posters. Include photos of winning students and their parents.
  9. As a part of your award ceremony, keep radon in the news by obtaining radon proclamations from local government officials for a city-wide Radon Action Month. Call your local extension coordinators to help you obtain a local radon proclamation and to leverage it effectively. For example, get the proclamation published in the local paper.
  10. Ask for time on the agenda of the city council meeting to showcase your winning posters and to distribute a radon goody bag filled with EPA's Citizens Guide to Radon, a radon zone or zip code map, a free test kit, pens and other items pertaining to radon. Kansas State University can provide radon collateral to be included in the bag.
  11. Arrange travel and special activities for the winners, such as a tour of state capital and meetings with officials. Prior to the signing of the proclamation, offer to provide the official with a free test kit – and follow up to make sure it is done. Then ask the local official to discuss this experience as part of their remarks at the proclamation signing ceremony. Try to get your local media to cover the event.

### ***Organizing an Award Ceremony***

One of the most effective ways to raise awareness about radon and recognize poster contest winners is hosting an awards ceremony for your state or local poster contest winners. An awards ceremony reaches families, motivates children, and offers a compelling story for the media. The following tips provide guidance for holding a successful awards ceremony:

- Consider hosting the awards ceremony in conjunction with National Radon Action Month in January. This is an excellent way to garner additional support for your radon program.
- Arrange event logistics. Consider the following details:
  - Secure a location (such as a school auditorium or city hall);
  - Send invitations;



- Create certificates or plaques for the winners;
- Invite and prepare speakers;
- Write an event program;
- Hire a photographer;
- Prepare the posters to be displayed; and
- Assemble a press kit to give to any media that attend the event.
- Confirm the availability of key individuals to attend your ceremony. Invite poster contest winners, parents, teachers, principals and government officials, and obtain permission from parents for the use of their children's photos.
- Notify local and state press about the event, and prepare photos of the winning posters for the media.

## Appendix – Conducting Interviews

Interviewing student winners of your state or local poster contest will help you raise radon awareness even after your contest has ended. Producing short audio or video interview clips will not only help you recognize the current contest winners, but will also give you materials to help promote the next poster contest and your radon awareness program as a whole. They may even give you insight on ways to improve your contest in the future.

There are several tips to keep in mind when producing interview clips to ensure that you receive the highest quality content and the most value.

1. If conducting an interview during an awards ceremony, find a quiet room away from the festivities to conduct the interview. This will allow for clear audio content with less background noise.
2. If available, identify an experienced interviewer to help you conduct the interviews. An experienced interviewer will know how to engage the students and make them comfortable to get the best possible answers.
3. In addition to interviewing students, try to interview their sponsoring teacher and their parent. This content could be valuable in promoting future radon awareness activities to teacher and parent audiences.
4. In addition to asking students about their experience specifically with the contest, ask them about their experience learning about radon overall.
5. Use the edited recording on your website or in electronic newsletters or e-mail updates to promote the contest. If video interviews are recorded, they can even be used to create a promotional video for your poster contest to engage new participants.

Below are sample interview questions for students and teachers. Feel free to use these questions to help you get started, and add your own to get the most out of your interviews!

### Students

- How did you learn about the poster contest?
- What inspired you to enter the poster contest?
- Explain your winning poster. How did you come up with your poster idea? What materials did you use?
- What did you learn about radon through the poster contest? How did you learn enough about radon to be able to draw your poster?
- What advice would you give to classmates who were interested in joining the contest next year?
- Did you and your family test your home for radon as result of the poster contest?



### Teachers

- How and when did you first become aware of the poster contest? What inspired you to get your students involved?
- How did you approach your students to participate in the poster contest? What barriers, if any, were overcome to get them involved?
- Have you included radon in your lesson plans/curriculum as a part of your class' participation in the poster contest? If so, how?
- How have other teachers, administration and parents shown their support for you and your students' participation in the poster contest?
- Has your participation in the poster contest contributed to your school or school district testing for radon or implementing other aspects of an indoor air quality management program? If so, how?
- What tips would you give other teachers who would like to become involved in the poster contest?