Department of Energy and Environment

DC Radon Program

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US EPA Region III Radon Stakeholder Meeting

Newark, DE

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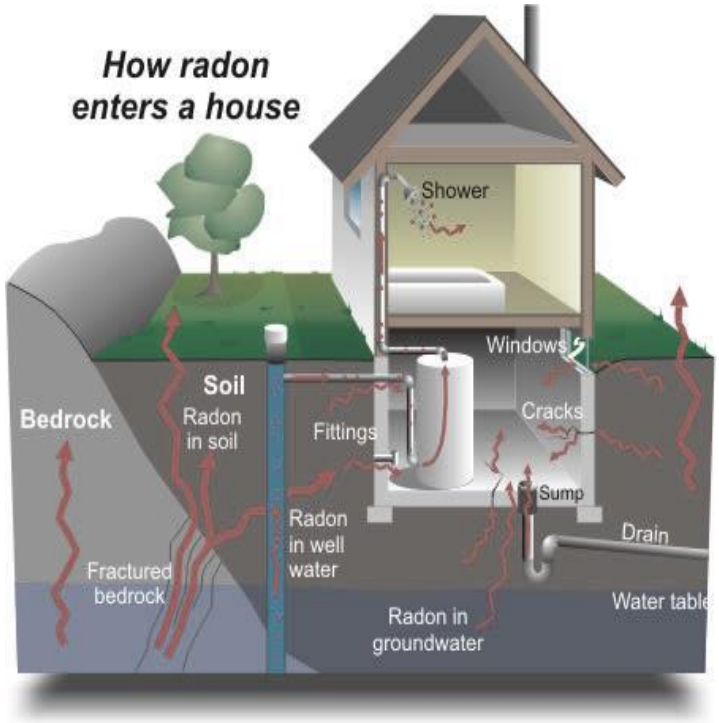
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

WE ARE WASHINGTON DC GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

Quick Overview

Radon is an invisible cancer-causing, radioactive soil gas that is colorless and tasteless. The only way to know if a home has radon is to test.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, radon has been found to be 2nd leading cause of lung cancer and the number one cause for non-smokers.

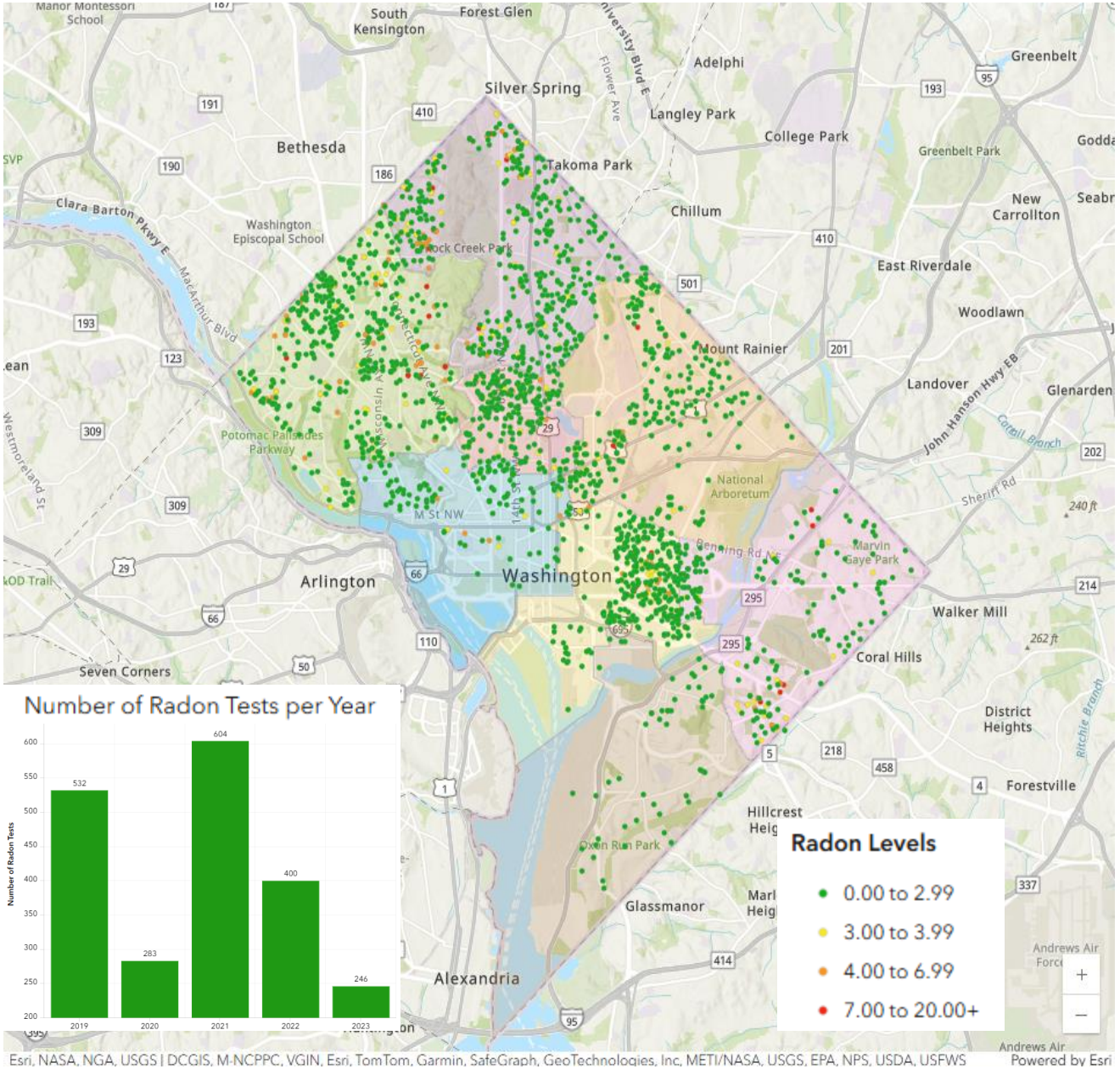


Radon Activities

1. Radon Hotline (202 535-2302)
2. Radon webpage (http://doee.dc.gov/radon.)
3. Free radon test kits for DC residents
4. Attend local and government community outreach events
5. Provide radon presentations and workshops
6. Radon map

DOEE Radon Map

- ✓ Currently, EPA has Washington, DC/District of Columbia listed as Zone 3
- ✓ Although the majority of test result data shows DC homes with levels lower than four (4) pico curries per liter (4pCi/L), some present levels above 4pCi/L.
- ✓ More high levels in upper NW
- ✓ More outreach needed in NE and SE
- ✓ New residents are interested and testing
- ✓ http://doee.dc.gov/radon



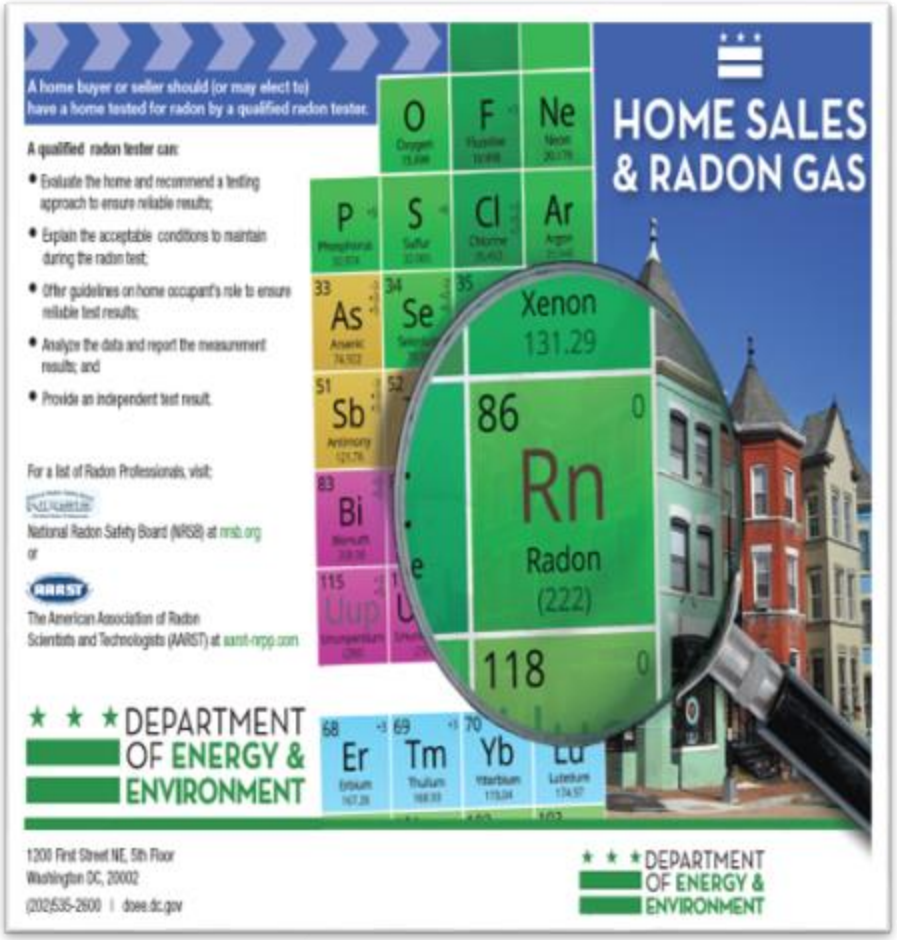
January 2025 – EPA National Radon Action Month
DC Radon Awareness Month
CDC Radon Awareness Week

- Radon Message via email blast to neighborhood organizations (>100,000 residents)
- Radon Message on Facebook
- Radon Message using Twitter/X
- Radon Message on DOEE Webpage
- DOEE Healthy Homes Digest Newsletter

FY 2025 Radon Outreach Events

- Mitchell Park Fall Fun Day (300)
- Black Family Wellness Expo (50)
- DPR Senior Games Clinic (22)
- Friends of Anacostia Park Nature Fest (45)
- Dept. of Parks and Rec. Senior Games Clinic (15)
- MPD Youth & Family Engagement Division (20)
- **Website hits, Tweets, Instagram impressions (1,785)**

Radon Outreach Flyers



Radon Outreach Flyers

SO, YOU'RE BUYING A HOUSE!

Make Sure You Test for RADON

WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. Radon gas is inert, colorless, and odorless. Radon, in trace amounts, is naturally in the atmosphere.

WHAT HEALTH PROBLEMS DOES RADON CAUSE?

When you breathe in radon, radioactive particles from radon gas can get trapped in your lungs. Over time, these radioactive particles increase the risk of lung cancer. It may take years before health problems appear. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking.

HOW COMMON IS IT TO HAVE RADON IN HOMES?

Any home can have a radon problem. This means new and old homes, well-seal and drafty homes, and homes with or without basements. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), nearly one out of every 15 homes in the United States is estimated to have an elevated radon level (4 pico-curries of liter of air -pCi/L or more). Elevated levels of radon gas have been found in the District of Columbia. To see the District's radon map displaying radon levels throughout the city and receive a free radon test kit (available for DC residents) visit the District's radon web page at doee.dc.gov/radon. Also, feel free to call the DOEE radon hotline at 202 535-2302.

IS IT BAD TO BUY A HOUSE WITH RADON?

Radon can seep into any home that is in contact with the ground. Radon is undetectable unless you perform a radon test. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer and according to the EPA and CDC, radon exposure is estimated to have caused approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths annually. Though radon seepage into a home may be common in some areas, radon can be mitigated using certified radon professionals. Make sure to ask the seller to show you a recent Radon test.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO TREAT RADON?

The cost of a mitigation system may vary according to the home's design, size, foundation, construction materials and the local climate. Radon reduction systems average costs nationally are $1,200 with a range from $800 to $1500 depending on house and market conditions. According to the EPA, when installed properly and completely, radon-resistant techniques can also make your home more energy efficient and help you save on your energy costs.

IS RADON A DEAL BREAKER?

Radon is a concern because it is known to cause lung cancer. However, there are ways to fix a radon problem and even very high levels can be reduced to acceptable levels. The EPA recommends asking the seller for their radon test results. If the home has a radon-reduction system, ask the seller for any information they have about the system. If a test has not been done go here to see the EPA's Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon. There is a Radon testing checklist and more information.

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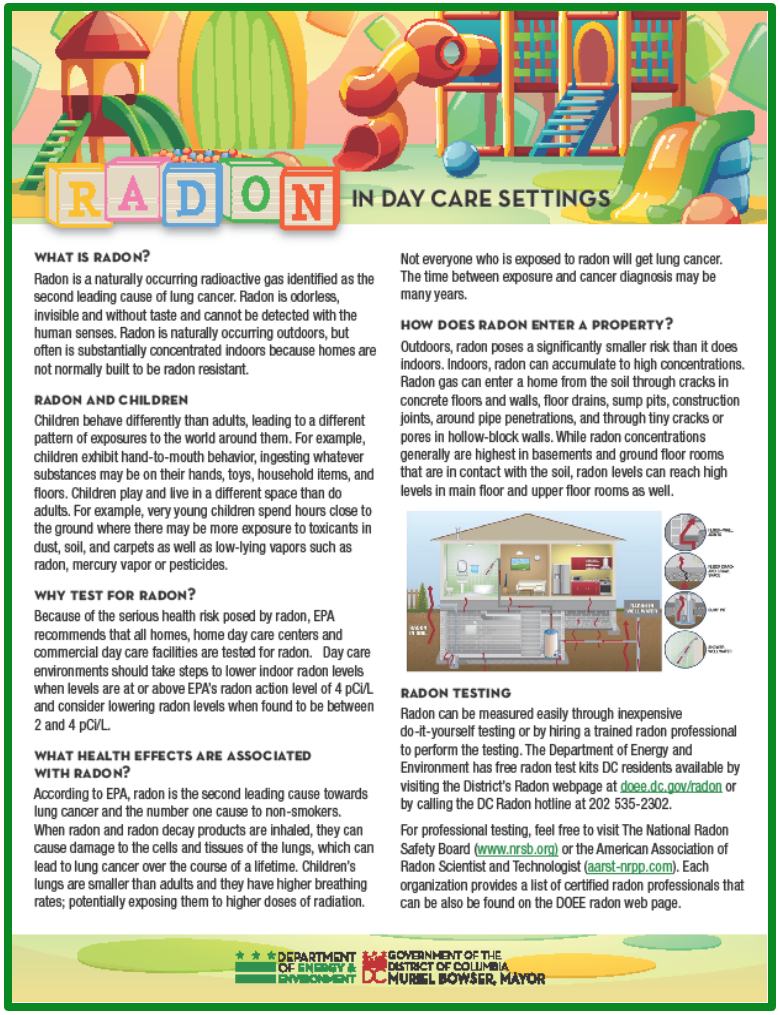

RADON IN DAY CARE SETTINGS

WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas identified as the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon is odorless, invisible and without taste and cannot be detected with the human senses. Radon is naturally occurring outdoors, but often is substantially concentrated indoors because homes are not normally built to be radon resistant.

RADON AND CHILDREN

Children behave differently than adults, leading to a different pattern of exposures to the world around them. For example, children exhibit hand-to-mouth behavior, ingesting whatever substances may be on their hands, toys, household items, and floors. Children play and live in a different space than do adults. For example, very young children spend hours close to the ground where there may be more exposure to toxicants in dust, soil, and carpets as well as low-lying vapors such as radon, mercury vapor or pesticides.

WHY TEST FOR RADON?

Because of the serious health risk posed by radon, EPA recommends that all homes, home day care centers and commercial day care facilities are tested for radon. Day care environments should take steps to lower indoor radon levels when levels are at or above EPA's radon action level of 4 pCi/L and consider lowering radon levels when found to be between 2 and 4 pCi/L.

WHAT HEALTH EFFECTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH RADON?

According to EPA, radon is the second leading cause towards lung cancer and the number one cause to non-smokers. When radon and radon decay products are inhaled, they can cause damage to the cells and tissues of the lungs, which can lead to lung cancer over the course of a lifetime. Children's lungs are smaller than adults and they have higher breathing rates; potentially exposing them to higher doses of radiation. Not everyone who is exposed to radon will get lung cancer. The time between exposure and cancer diagnosis may be many years.

HOW DOES RADON ENTER A PROPERTY?

Outdoors, radon poses a significantly smaller risk than it does indoors. Indoors, radon can accumulate to high concentrations. Radon gas can enter a home from the soil through cracks in concrete floors and walls, floor drains, sump pits, construction joints, around pipe penetrations, and through tiny cracks or pores in hollow-block walls. While radon concentrations generally are highest in basements and ground floor rooms that are in contact with the soil, radon levels can reach high levels in main floor and upper floor rooms as well.

RADON TESTING

Radon can be measured easily through inexpensive do-it-yourself testing or by hiring a trained radon professional to perform the testing. The Department of Energy and Environment has free radon test kits DC residents available by visiting the District's Radon webpage at doee.dc.gov/radon or by calling the DC Radon hotline at 202 535-2302.

For professional testing, feel free to visit The National Radon Safety Board (www.nrsb.org) or the American Association of Radon Scientist and Technologist (aarst-nrpp.com). Each organization provides a list of certified radon professionals that can be also be found on the DOEE radon web page.

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