

January is Radon Awareness Month

Is there radon in Macoupin County?

YES!!

Studies by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and other studies show that radon occurs in every county in Illinois.

IEMA data collected from 2019, indicating 34% of the homes that were tested in Macoupin County had indoor radon levels of 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L) or greater.

The USEPA has set 4 pCi/L as the Action Level, the level at which residents should take steps to reduce radon levels.

The average Radon levels in Macoupin County homes are 3.7pCi/L.

Does radon really cause lung cancer?

YES!!

Radon is a Class A human carcinogen, which means there is actual evidence that exposure to radon causes lung cancer in humans. In addition to USEPA and IEMA, radon's risk is recognized by the American Medical Association, the American Lung Association, the World Health Organization, and many others.

Do people in Illinois take radon seriously?

YES!!

In 1997, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Radon Industry Licensing Act. This act regulates matters concerning the presence, effects, measurement, and mitigation of radon by establishing a licensing program for radon measurement and mitigation contractors.

In 2008, the Illinois Radon Awareness Act was passed which requires the disclosure of radon hazards for real estate transactions.

In 2013, the Radon Resistant Construction Act was passed which requires all new residential construction include passive radon resistant construction.

My house doesn't have a basement, could I still have high radon levels?

YES!!

Any home can have elevated radon levels. It doesn't matter whether your house is old or new, or whether it has a basement, crawlspace, or slab on grade foundation. Most radon enters a home because of air pressure and temperature differentials between the indoor and outdoor air. When air is exhausted by natural or powered ventilation, make up air is drawn through openings in the foundation from the surrounding soil. Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas. Testing is the only way to determine the radon level and risk in your own home.

Can I test for radon myself?

YES!!

Radon testing is easy and inexpensive. Radon test kits are available at the Macoupin County Health Department at 112 S. Macoupin in Gillespie, IL. Office hours are Monday thru Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm or please call 217-839-4114, 217-839-4110, or 217-839-4111 for more information

Follow these easy steps to radon testing:

1. Conduct and initial short-term radon test.
2. If your initial short-term test result is <4pCi/L no action is necessary. You may want to re-test in the future.
3. If your initial short-term test result is between 4pCi/L and 8 pCi/L, follow up with another short term or long-term test. If the average of the two test is 4 pCi/L or greater, IEMA recommends reducing the radon level.
4. If your initial short-term test is 8pCi/L or greater, follow up with another short-term test. If the follow up result agrees with the initial result, IEMA recommends reducing radon level.

If my house has a high radon level, is there anything I can do about it?

YES!!

Indoor radon levels can be lowered by installing a radon mitigation system. The mitigation system collects radon prior to its entry into the house and discharges it to a safe location. It also modifies building air pressure differentials and dilutes radon concentrations with increased ventilation

Can I install the radon mitigation system myself?

YES!!

Residents of a dwelling may install a mitigation system in their own dwelling; however, without proper equipment and technical knowledge, you could actually increase your radon level or create other hazards.

The best way to install a radon mitigation system is to hire an IEMA licensed radon mitigation professional. It is always best to obtain two or three price estimates. The cost of a mitigation generally ranges from \$800-1200, depending on characteristics of the house and choice of radon reduction methods. Be sure you understand the mitigation system design proposed by the licensed contractor.

Illinois radon mitigation systems must include effective radon reduction; unobtrusive and permanent installation; quiet operation; energy efficient operation and maintenance; a system function indicator; a primary suction point independent of the sump pit; sump covers with observation ports; and exhaust above the highest eave and as close to the roof line as possible.

For more information please contact:

Macoupin County Public Health Department

112 S. Macoupin

Gillespie, IL 62033

Phone: 217-839-4114 or 4110 or 4111

or

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

Department of Nuclear Safety

2200 S. Dirksen Parkway

Springfield, IL 62703

1-800-325-1245 (Information Line) or (217) 782-1325 (IEMA staff member)