

Radon in Maine

A Serious Hidden Danger to Family Health

Radon Tipsheet #1



Living in a home with high radon levels is a major risk for lung cancer.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. High levels of radon gas occur naturally in Maine soil and water, and can move up into a house from the ground. The house then traps the radon in the air inside. Radon gas can also dissolve into well water, which is then released into the air when you use the water. Simple air and well water tests can show whether home radon levels meet state and national safety guidelines.

Any home can have a radon problem. Testing is the only way to find a problem.

Any house can have a radon problem. It doesn't matter if it's old or new, or where it's located. The only way to know if your house has a problem is to test.

You can test your air and well water with simple test kits purchased from Maine registered testing labs for about \$60 or less. Or, you can hire a registered radon tester. If you have a well, you need to test it along with your air. To find out where to buy test kits or to hire a registered tester:

- www.MaineRadiationControl.org
- **1-800-232-0842**
- Use the Tipsheets: #2 *Testing Your Home for Radon* and #5 *Working with a Registered Radon Tester*.

Treatment systems work to lower radon levels in air and well water.

Radon problems can be fixed. Once you test and know your radon numbers, you can plan the next steps. In most houses, current methods make it possible to get air and well water levels below current safety guidelines.

If both air and well water tests are done, the results must be considered together to decide on the best and most cost effective fix.

Fixing a radon problem should be done by an expert—a registered contractor. In Maine, contractors are registered separately to fix problems with radon in air and problems with radon in well water. Use the website below to get a list of registered contractors. Use Tipsheets #6 and #7 about radon treatment systems.

Protect your family. Learn. Test. Treat if needed.

- Check this website: www.MaineRadiationControl.org
- For advice: **1-800-232-0842** • radon.dhhs@maine.gov • TTY: **800-606-0215**



When You Build a New Home: Put in a System to Reduce Radon Dangers

Radon Tipsheet #4



When you build a new house, protect your family from radon—a major health danger.

Radon is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer. High levels of radon gas occur naturally in Maine soil and water, and can move into a house through the ground. The house then traps the radon in the air inside. ANY house can have a radon problem. It doesn't matter where it's located.

When you build a new home, you have the chance to protect your family from radon.

Ask your contractor to put in a radon reduction system. The system will cost a little extra - around \$1000 or less. This costs less than putting in a treatment system later, and it will work better. The State of Maine has standards for building low radon homes. Check the website below or call us to find out more.

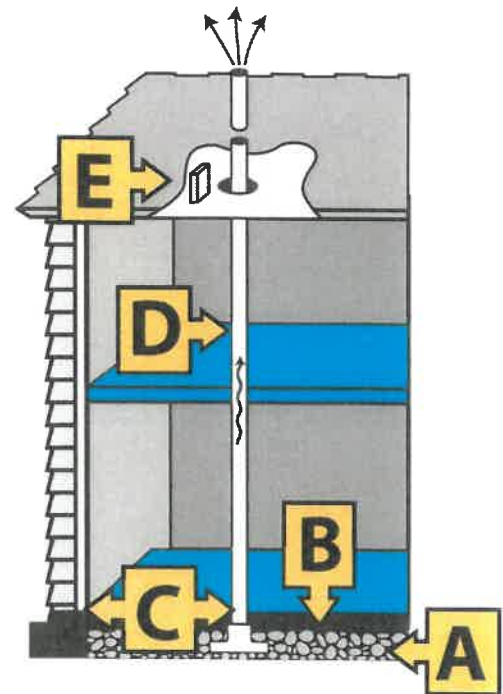


Most techniques include prepping under the foundation, pipes, and an electric 'box'.

A radon reduction system has 5 important parts shown in the illustration at right.

What the letters point to:

- A** At least a 4-inch layer of clean gravel or other material under the flooring that allows soil gases to move under the house
- B** Heavy plastic sheeting over the gravel and under the slab to prevent soil gases from coming into the house. In crawl spaces, this sheeting is placed directly over the earth floor.
- C** Cracks and openings in the foundation and walls sealed and caulked to help prevent soil gases from getting in
- D** A Vent pipe (4-inch PVC pipe commonly used for plumbing) that runs from the gravel layer, up through the house, and out the roof
- E** Electric junction box installed so that if needed, an electric fan can be added to draw the radon up and out of the soil



When you move in, test for radon. The test results will tell you if you need to add a fan and activate your system.

If you had a well drilled, be sure to test the well water for radon too.

Use Radon Tipsheet #2 *Test Your Home for Radon* from the website below to make sure you test correctly.

Discuss your specific situation with State of Maine radon experts.

Protect your family. Learn. Test. Treat if needed.

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