Working with a Registered Radon Tester

Radon Tipsheet #5

May 2019

In a house sale, testing for radon MUST be done by a registered radon tester.

Radon is a serious threat to health of Maine families. It makes sense to have homes tested. If the test numbers are higher than state and national safety guidelines, treatment systems can be installed. Current methods make it possible to get air levels in most houses to around 2 pCi/L or below, and well water levels to 4000 pCi/L or below (pCi/L stands for "picocuries per liter" — but just the number matters.)

If you are buying or selling a house and testing for radon, state law requires that you use a Maine registered radon tester. This assures that an impartial expert does the job.

Accurate radon test results depend on getting the tests done right.

Help make sure that radon test results are accurate.

If a house uses well water (not town or public), the water should be tested for radon separately from the air. Make sure your tester is registered to test both. Find a current list of registered testers at the website below. Ask to see their Maine registration ID card. Test reports should show this number too.

Most radon air test kits are small bottles or canisters that are opened for 2 to 7 days, and then resealed and sent back to the lab.

For air tests, make sure that:

The tester uses a test device from a registered radon test lab or is registered to use a state approved continuous monitor.

- A short term test (2 - 7 days) is done under closed house conditions. This means windows and doors are closed 12 hours before the test begins and stay closed during the test, except for normal entry and exit.
- Heating and cooling systems run normally. If air conditioners run, they need to be set to re-circulate inside air.
- If the house has a radon-reduction system with a vent fan, confirm that the fan is working properly and is on at least 24 hours before the test begins and stays on during the test.

For well water tests make sure that the water sample to test for radon is collected separately from samples used to test the water for germs and other pollutants.

Radon treatment systems can lower radon levels in air and water to meet safety guidelines.

Radon test results can help you plan next steps.

Air Test Results

If your air test number is:

- **4 or higher**
  You need a treatment system.
- **Between 2 and 4 –** maybe treat
  Call us to discuss: 1-800-232-0842.
- **Below 2** and you tested in cold weather with the heat on—retest in 3 to 5 years. If you tested in warmer weather when heat is off, test again in cold weather when heat is on.

Water Test Results

If your well water number is:

- **10,000 or higher**
  You need a treatment system.
- **Between 4,000 and 10,000 –** maybe treat
  Call us to discuss: 1-800-232-0842.
- **4,000 or lower**
  Retest in 3 to 5 years.

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.

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**