

What is radon?

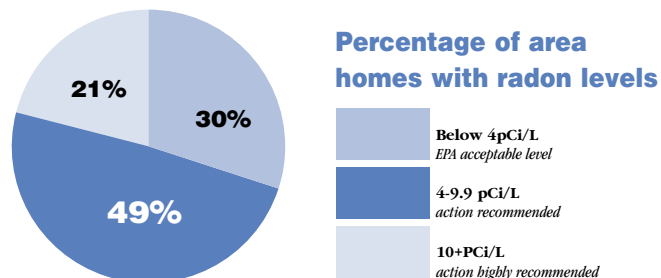
Radon is an invisible, odorless, radioactive gas created during the natural decay of uranium in the soil. Radon is everywhere, and Colorado has higher concentrations than other regions. Radon gas is drawn into homes and other buildings through cracks and openings in basements, crawl spaces and slabs. Radon levels vary from house to house and have nothing to do with age, quality or upkeep of the home.

Why is radon a concern?

Radon gas has been shown to cause lung cancer in people who are exposed to elevated levels over a long period of time. The US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) recommends action when radon levels reach or exceed 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). If you smoke and your home has an elevated radon level, your risk for lung cancer is especially high. Government agencies, including the City of Fort Collins, rely upon US EPA guidelines regarding acceptable levels of radon in the house. Test for radon in your home!

What are radon levels in Fort Collins?

Thousands of Fort Collins homes have been tested for radon by individual homeowners and private radon testers. Test results indicate that 70% of Fort Collins homes have radon levels of 4 pCi/L or above. But don't let these numbers scare you away from Colorado! Radon is a problem that can be fixed.



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Radon
Buying and Selling
a Home in Fort Collins



Short term tests.

Measure radon for 3-5 days. They are a good choice when a quick radon test is needed. However, the test is simply a “snapshot” of the radon levels during the test period. Radon levels vary with wind, barometric pressure and whether windows are open or closed so a short term test does not reflect the average radon level over time.



Long term tests.



Measure radon for several months to a year. They are a good choice to find the average level of radon in your home. Use long term test results after you move in to decide if a radon reduction system should be installed.

How do I test for radon?

There are two approaches to measure radon:

- 1.** Conduct self-administered tests. The City sells radon testing kits (\$3.50 for short-term, \$13.95 for long-term) at two locations during regular business hours:
 - Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive
 - Fort Collins Building and Zoning Department 281 North College Ave.
- 2.** Hire a professional tester. We recommend (*but it is not required*) that you use a professional who is certified by the National Environmental Health Association (*see www.radongas.org*) or the National Radon Safety Board (*see www.nrsb.org*). For a list of radon testers and contractors, please look in the phone book under Radon Testing or Radon Mitigation.

New homes and radon

Homes built in Fort Collins in 2005 or after are required to have a radon reduction system installed during construction. The required system relies on passive ventilation (there is no fan) and is concealed within the internal skeleton of the home. You should conduct a radon test to confirm the radon reduction system’s effectiveness and install a fan if radon levels are unacceptable.

Fort Collins homes built before 2005

Homes built before 2005 are not required to have a radon reduction system. No matter what the age of your future home, take time to test radon levels. If your dream home has high radon levels, does this mean you should walk away? Absolutely not! There are ways to effectively reduce radon levels. Of all the

problems that a house can have, radon is one of the most easy to identify and fix. Radon can be reduced before you buy a home or after you buy it and move in.

Is radon testing or mitigation required?

City code does not require radon testing. Radon mitigation systems are only required in homes built in 2005 or later. Fort Collins City Code requires that sellers provide a copy of this informational brochure to all buyers of residential property at point of sale (prior to the execution of a contract on a home). The “seller” may be a real estate agent, home-owner, attorney or any other person acting on behalf of the seller.

How can radon levels be reduced?

Don’t despair if you find elevated radon concentrations in your home! Radon levels can be reduced by installing a radon mitigation system. A plastic pipe is connected to the soil beneath a slab, basement or crawl space floor and then extended to the outside of the home. An in-line fan draws radon from the soil through the pipe, and radon is harmlessly exhausted into the outside air.



For more radon information:

City of Fort Collins
Natural Resources
Department
Air Quality Program
970-221-6600
www.fcgov.com/radon

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