



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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January is the best time of year to test for indoor radon; free radon test kits offered this month for those who tested in the summer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Studies find excessive indoor radon is found most frequently during the winter heating season, even though it can be found in some homes during all months of the year. In Alabama's highest radon areas, houses that had no excessive radon when tested during the summer air-conditioning season have up to a one in three chance of having excessive radon if retested during the winter heating season.

To encourage wintertime retesting of houses where previous summertime radon tests found no excessive radon, the Office of Radiation Control of the Alabama Department of Public Health is offering a free radon test kit to qualified homeowners during the month of January.

"Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, causing an estimated 22,000 deaths a year," said James L. McNees, assistant director of the Office of Radiation Control. "The best time to test for radon is during the colder months, when your home is closed and radon levels are likely to build to their highest concentrations. It is advisable for Alabama homeowners whose prior summertime radon test showed no excessive radon to retest during the winter heating season."

High levels of indoor radon have been found in many areas of Alabama; however, the problem appears to occur most frequently in homes across the Tennessee Valley and in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains from Jefferson and Shelby counties to Cleburne County. Because radon is a colorless, odorless gas that occurs naturally in soil and rocks through the breakdown of uranium, testing is the only way to know the radon level in a home.

Testing for radon should be done on the lowest level of the home on which people spend a lot of time, so a finished basement or a basement containing a workshop is a good place to test. Kitchens are not recommended testing areas.

To receive a free test kit this month, homeowners should mail or fax a copy of the results of their summertime radon test to the Office of Radiation Control, Alabama Department

of Public Health, P. O. Box 303017, Montgomery, Ala. 36130-3017 or fax to 334-206-5387. For more information on this offer please call 1-800-582-1866.

More information on radon, including a list of certified radon testers and mitigators, is available on the Internet at <http://www.aces.edu/radon> or by calling 1-800-582-1866.

To learn more about this and other radiation and health issues visit the ADPH Web site at <http://www.adph.org/RADIATION/>.

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