



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Radon test kits can save lives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Looking for a thoughtful gift that's small, doesn't cost much and saves lives? Giving a radon test kit this holiday season will help jumpstart January as National Radon Action Month.

"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, Alabama Department of Public Health. "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. So this is the perfect time of year to give a test kit as a gift and urge friends or family to test their homes."

High levels of indoor radon have been found in many areas of Alabama; however, it 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.

Radon test kits weigh only a few ounces and cost about \$10 or less. Testing for radon should be done on the lowest level of the home on which the occupants spend time, so a finished basement or a basement containing a workshop is a good place to test. Kitchens are not recommended testing areas.

"Testing directions are on the kit, and it only takes a few days to obtain a sample," McNees said. "Most people can easily do a radon test on their home."

"If test results are above the levels recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Alabama Department of Public Health, homeowners should consider installing a radon remediation system."

While radon test kits are available at many larger home improvement stores, homeowners can get one to test their own home for wholesale at many local offices of the Cooperative Extension System.

To learn more about this and other radiation and health issues visit the ADPH Web site at <http://www.adph.org/radiation/Default.asp?id=1906>.

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