



Radon and Real Estate in Ohio

Introduction

This fact sheet provides information from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) on how to address radon concerns that may arise during real estate transactions. The intent of this fact sheet is to assist buyers and sellers in making informed decisions about radon during the sale of a home.

What is radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas which comes from the natural decay of uranium that is found in soil and rocks. Radon is odorless, colorless and tasteless.

Why is radon important in Ohio?

Ohio's soils contain concentrations of uranium and radium that supply a constant source of radon. Many of our houses are built and operated in ways that increase the likelihood of radon entry in homes. Although radon is present throughout the environment, indoor radon levels are generally higher. Breathing air with elevated level of radon over a period of time can cause damage to lung tissue and cells. This damage increases the risk of lung cancer. Elevated levels of indoor radon have been found in homes in all 88 counties in Ohio.

What is the role of the real estate professional?

Real estate professionals address many aspects of buying and selling homes. However, Ohio Law prohibits them from offering technical advice regarding radon and health risks unless they are licensed by ODH to do so. Instead, they should be advising their clients to consult with the ODH Radon Program staff at 1-800-523-4439 or consult U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reference materials on radon.

How can I determine if a home has a radon problem?

A properly performed radon test is the only way to find out if elevated radon levels exist. Testing should be conducted by an ODH licensed radon tester* for any real estate transaction. The U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set a recommended action level for radon at 4 picoCuries per Liter of air (4pCi/L). What this means is, if the radon test results indicate levels of 4 pCi/L or higher, action should be taken to reduce the indoor radon levels.

What can be done to fix a radon problem?

If elevated levels of radon are found, action should be taken to lower the amount of radon in the home by installing a quality radon mitigation system. The system should be installed by an ODH licensed mitigation contractor*. Since a radon problem can be fixed, there is no reason why radon should be a "deal breaker" during a real estate transaction.

Where can I get more information on radon?

ODH Indoor Radon Program

www.odh.ohio.gov

1-800-523-4439.

US EPA

www.epa.gov/radon

1-800-SOS-RADON

*A list of Ohio licensed radon testers and contractors can be found on the ODH Indoor Radon Program web site or by calling the phone number listed above.