

**TIPS for HOMEOWNERS #3  
RADON**

**1. What is radon?**

Radon is a naturally occurring gas produced by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. It is the decay products of radon, called "radon daughters" that cause the hazards attributed to radon. These "daughters" are atoms of heavy metals and readily attach themselves to whatever they contact.

**2. Can I see, taste, or smell radon?**

NO. That is why people have a tendency to feel that their home is safe.

**3. Is radon harmful?**

The Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States; only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths.

**4. How does radon enter the home?**

Air pressure inside the home is usually lower than pressure in the soil around the home's foundation. Because of this, your house acts like a vacuum, drawing radon in through foundation cracks and other openings.

**5. Who should test for radon?**

Everybody.

**6. How is radon measured?**

It is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). Short term or canister method tests measure radon levels over a period of 2-4 days. Long term tests such as Alpha Track measure an average value for a period of 2 months to a year. Continuous methods give hourly radon readings which are then usually averaged. Fredericktowne Labs is listed by the EPA as an approved laboratory for performing these tests.

**7. What level of radon is considered "safe"?**

The EPA's goal is that the indoor radon level be no more than the outdoor level which is about 0.4 pCi/L; however, levels below 4 pCi/L are considered acceptable.

**8. Should I take steps to repair my home if it tests higher than 4.0 pCi/l?**

The EPA recommends fixing your home if the results of one long-term test or two short-term tests taken in the lowest lived-in-level of the home show radon levels of 4 pCi/L or higher. If you choose to do two short term measurements, it is advised that you perform the tests during different seasons of the year.

**9. Should I have a radon abatement contractor test my home?**

No. The EPA advises that you use an independent laboratory such as Fredericktowne Labs or purchase an EPA-approved detection kit from a store and follow the enclosed directions.

**10. Should I have my well water tested?**

If you have an increased radon reading and are on a well, you may want to consider having your well water tested for radon. In general, every 10,000 pCi/L of radon found in the water causes an increase of 1 pCi/L of radon in the air.

**For additional information call the Maryland Radon Contact: 1-800-872-3666, or call Fredericktowne Labs: 301-293-3340 or 301-694-7133.**