RADON

What is radon and how does it affect your home? Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas. Radon forms through the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water.

Radon moves up through the ground to the air above and into your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation. Homes trap radon inside, where it can build up and be inhaled by the inhabitants. Any home may have a radon problem, new and old homes, well-sealed and drafty homes, as well as homes with or without basements.

Why is Radon a problem? Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. As these particles break down further, they release small bursts of energy. This can damage lung tissue and potentially lead to lung cancer over the course of your lifetime.

The EPA estimates that radon is responsible for approximately 20,000 deaths from lung cancer every year. Not everyone exposed to elevated levels of radon will develop lung cancer and the amount of time between exposure and the onset of the disease may be many years.

Believe it or not radon is a controversial topic and there are actually those that don't even believe it exists, or that it can be harmful. On the other hand, here is a list of organizations that state Radon is a health threat:

- U.S. Surgeon General
- American Medical Association
- American Lung Association
- Centers for Disease Control
- National Cancer Institute
- National Academy of Sciences
- Environmental Protection Agency

Is there anything I can do? Absolutely, radon reduction systems work and they are not too costly. Some radon reduction systems can reduce radon levels in your home by up to 99%. Even very high levels can be reduced to acceptable levels. It is not unusual to see tests in homes with mitigation systems come in below the level of the outside air.

How does this work when buying a house? In Colorado Springs, we generally treat radon as an inspection issue. This means that we test for radon during the property inspection. If radon levels are high (4 pCi/L or higher) the installation of a mitigation system becomes a negotiable item. We will discuss inspections in another section.

The cost of a Radon mitigation system can range from $1,500 to $3,000, depending on the state of the existing foundation of the home. Systems for newer homes tend to cost less because modern building code requires builders to install perimeter or French drains around the base of a homes foundation. This drain is intended to keep

water away from the foundation but also allows for easier installation of the radon mitigation system.

Radon infiltration is a serious condition. Even if you don't think it's harmful, chances are the next person to buy your home will. The time to address radon is before you close not when you sell.

Much of this information comes from an EPA publication named "A Citizen's Guide to Radon" If you are interested in obtaining a free copy of this publication, Click Here and we'll send you one.

AirCheck is a compay that sells mail in radon test kits. Here is an interesting summary they have compiled that outlines the average radon levels are in our area, by zip code:

Eastern El Paso County:

Zip Code	Number of Tests	Average pCi/L
80106	23	5.7
80831	71	5.0
80915	88	4.9
80922	98	3.8

Northern El Paso County:

Zip Code	Number of Tests	Average pCi/L
80132	307	5.7
80133	36	8.8
80908	181	5.9
80920	256	6.1
80921	143	5.9

Central El Paso County:

Zip Code	Number of Tests	Average pCi/L
80903	102	3.9
80907	193	4.3
80909	244	2.7
80917	156	3.0
80918	345	3.7

Southeastern El Paso County:

Zip Code	Number of Tests	Average pCi/L
80817	36	5.0
80910	76	3.1
80911	89	4.4
80913	10	2.1
80914	4	5.8
80916	73	3.0
80925	7	2.8

Western El Paso County:

Zip Code	Number of Tests	Average pCi/L
80819	15	15.5
80829	154	15.8
80840	9	1.2
80904	300	7.2
80905	16	11.7
80906*	769	13.1
80919	633	6.6
80926	40	4.9

Teller County:

Zip Code	Number of Tests	Average pCi/L
80813	5	30.0
80814	66	11.3
80816	58	12.8
80827	18	9.9
80860	2	5.3
80863	128	10.5
80866	79	8.8

*According to AirCheck, this average includes a test result of 1,856 pCi/L, this may or may not be an accurate reading. AirChek reports some people have hung test kits down mitigation exhaust pipes to check

radon output or set kits near foundations to try to determine radon entry points. If the 1,856 reading is not factored in, the average in the 80906 ZIP drops to 10.6 pCi/L, according to AirChek.