

Vermont Radon Fact Sheet

VERMONT RADON PROGRAM

<http://www.healthvermont.gov/radon>

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Vermont Cancer Control Plan

<http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2016/12/VermontCancerPlan.pdf>

The mission of the **Vermont Division of Environmental Health** is to prevent illness or disease that may be caused by environmental threats, both natural and human-made, and to reduce or eliminate harmful environmental exposures. We do this by applying sound science and regulation to assess and minimize risk. We provide data, information and education about health and the environment. We offer a variety of programs, all designed to ensure that healthy Vermonters live in healthy environments.

Radon in Vermont

Almost one in seven Vermont homes has unsafe levels of radon. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that has no color, smell or taste. Radon comes from the decay of uranium, which is a radioactive element found naturally in the earth's crust. Over billions of years, uranium decays into radium, and eventually, radon.

Smoking and radon are the leading causes of lung cancer. Radon and smoking risks don't add up. They multiply.

Unless you test for it, there is no way of knowing if radon is present in your home.

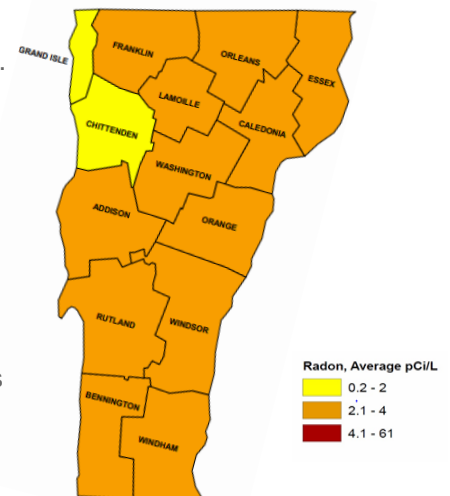
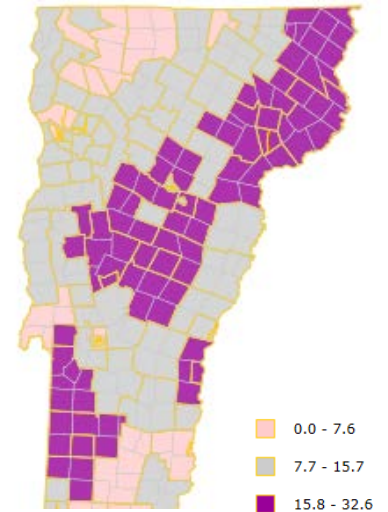
13% of Vermont homes exceed the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) action level, and 4% exceed twice the EPA action level. If you smoke and your home has high levels of radon, your risk of getting lung cancer is especially high. EPA estimates 86% of radon-related lung cancer deaths occur among current or former smokers. Lung cancer due to smoking and radon can be prevented.

About the Program

The Vermont Radon Program offers free long-term radon in air test kits to Vermont residents. Many Vermonters have tested their homes and the program continues to provide outreach on the importance of testing homes for radon. The program provides further outreach to any home with a radon level greater or equal to 2.0 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) with the objective to increase the number of homes that install a radon mitigation system.

The Vermont Radon Program offers free radon screenings and mitigation support to interested Vermont schools. To date, approximately 25% of Vermont's public schools have been screened for radon. Almost 14% of schools screened have had at least one room with a radon level at or above the EPA action level. It is estimated that there are approximately 30 public schools in Vermont that have at least one room with a high level of radon and do not know it.

Vermont Sub-County Areas
>> % Elevated Radon Tests (1993-2012)



Lastly, the Vermont Radon Program promotes and educates builders and contractors on the use of radon-resistant new construction (RRNC) techniques.

Pending/Enacted Legislation

Vermont law does not require a radon test as part of a real estate transaction. For real estate transactions or other cases where a quick test is needed, the Vermont Health Department Laboratory sells short-term radon test kits. Request a kit under the Environmental Testing and Drinking Water Testing Order Forms section. Short-term test kits can also be purchased from private labs and building supply stores.

Vermont law does not require radon testing or mitigation in schools. There is pending legislation that would initiate a pilot to test a portion of Vermont schools. This legislation would also establish a committee to identify possible funding sources for school radon mitigations.

Vermont Cancer Control Plan

With an objective to prevent cancer from occurring, the plan focuses on tobacco, oral health, physical activity and nutrition, HPV and Environmental Hazards (ultraviolet radiation, radon and safe drinking water). Strategies to reduce the burden of radon induced lung cancer include support partners and promoting programs focused on reducing environmental hazards like radon in air and water.

The plan includes goals to reduce exposure to environmental hazards among Vermonters. Specifically, one goal is to reduce exposure to radon by increasing the percent of households that install a radon mitigation system when they receive a high radon test result. Last year, of households that received a radon result at or above 4.0 pCi/L, 39% mitigated their home.

It is estimated that 50 Vermonters die from radon-related lung cancer each year. Most of the deaths occur among smokers and former smokers.

Funding

The Vermont Radon Program is funded by the EPA State Indoor Radon Grant (SIRG). This is a grant that is a maximum of 60% federally funded with a minimum of a 40% match from the state. In addition to outreach materials, testing supplies, and sub-grants, SIRG helps fund program staff including the Program Technician, Industrial Hygienist and Administrative Services Technician. The Environmental Public Health Surveillance Chief provides an in-kind match of 15%.

