

**Consumer insight** | Dangers in your home

# Test for radon gas, gain peace of mind

Jeremy Worley, a certified radon mitigation specialist for Greene's Inc., discusses ways to detect radon gas and measures to address it.

## Explain why radon gas can be a danger?

Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from the natural decay of uranium found in all types of soil throughout Utah and much of the West, with higher concentrations in northwestern Utah and along the Wasatch Front. It can't be seen, smelled or tasted. It seeps into homes through cracks and holes in foundations and concrete slabs, and builds up in lower levels. Radon gas has been linked to some forms of lung cancer. Smokers who live in a home with elevated radon levels are particularly at risk.

## How efficient are do-it-yourself test kits?

The kits are put in the lower level of a home for two to four days and then sent to a lab for analysis. They are efficient, but if results are not analyzed within a few days they can become inconclusive and the test might have to be repeated. Typically, do-it-yourself tests cost from \$15 to \$35 for the kit, shipping and analysis. Kits are available at local hardware stores and through the Utah Safety Council. Homeowners also can have professional radon specialists test their homes and receive results the same day

the test is picked up. Professional testing costs around \$100.

## What's the next step if the test results are high?

If results indicate radon levels between 4.0pCi/L and 8.0pCi/L (a measure of radioactivity), we recommend taking a follow-up test. There are two options, a long-term test, which is a good indication of year-round radon levels, or a second, short-term test. If the initial test shows radon levels of more than 8.0pCi/L, there should be an immediate follow-up test. If the second

test is still more than 8.0pCi/L, a radon-mitigation system should be installed to reduce radon levels.

## What can homeowners do to reduce radon levels?

A mitigation system, which costs from \$1,200 to \$1,800, includes a vent fan that pulls radon gas from the soil under a home, up through piping and out of the structure.

An installer should be licensed and insured. Installation normally takes about one day.

A follow-up, short-term test should be conducted to ensure the system has lowered the levels below the Environmental Protection Agency's safety level of 4.0 pCi/L.

— Dawn House

Jeremy Worley, radon mitigation specialist for Greene's Inc. in Woods Cross



## On the radar

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality has a map illustrating the areas with generally higher radon levels at [www.radon.utah.gov/realtest.htm](http://www.radon.utah.gov/realtest.htm).