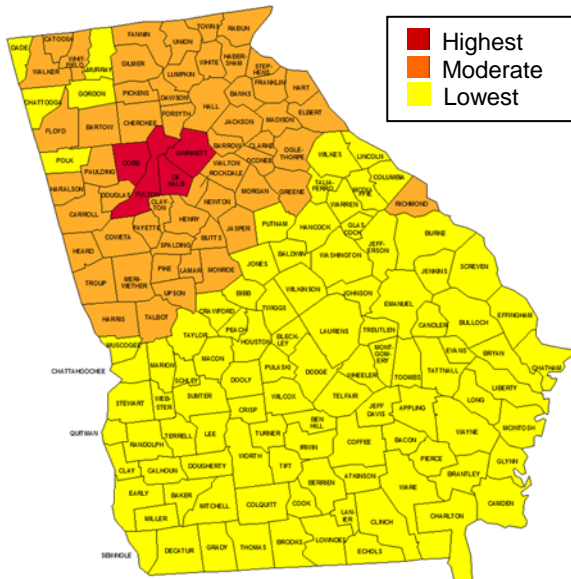


WHAT IS RADON?

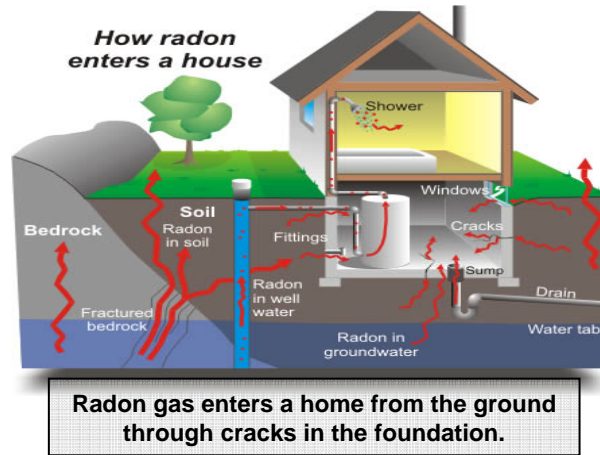
Radon is a colorless, odorless gas that comes from the decay of the natural radioactive element, uranium, found in some soils and rocks. Radon gas goes through radioactive decay and emits particles that can be harmful to the human body, primarily the lungs. It is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Radon can be found all over the United States in varying amounts. It can get into any type of structure and build up, resulting in a high indoor radon level.

RADON IN GEORGIA

Radon gas is more common in northern Georgia because of geology and soil composition. Most uranium in Georgia is found in this region, especially in the Metro Atlanta area.



The potential for elevated levels of radon for Georgia counties.



HOW CAN I BE EXPOSED TO RADON?

People can be exposed to radon from breathing air or from drinking water. Radon is most harmful to people when it is breathed in. Radon gets into homes and other buildings through cracks or openings in the foundation. If not ventilated outside, radon can build up indoors to harmful levels.

Drinking water containing radon is much less of a health risk than inhaling radon. However, radon can also get into indoor air from water containing radon, mostly during bathing, cleaning, and cooking.

Radon gas is heavier than air. Small children are at greater risk for radon exposure because they breathe air closer to the ground where levels are highest, and they breathe a greater volume of air in relation to their body size.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF RADON

Radon causes lung cancer. More than 20,000 Americans die of radon-related lung cancer every year. If you smoke, your risk of lung cancer from radon exposure is much higher.

HOW DO I TEST FOR RADON?

Testing the air is the only way to know if you are being exposed to unsafe levels of radon. According to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency about one in every 15 homes has a radon level at or above the recommended action level. It is possible for homes next door to each other to have different radon levels.

Testing is inexpensive and easy. Radon can be detected with a simple test and fixed through inexpensive and established methods.

Radon exposure is entirely preventable by testing indoor air, and taking appropriate measures to reduce radon levels.

There are many types of "do-it-yourself" radon test kits that you can get through the mail and in hardware stores and other retail outlets. Or, you can hire a certified contractor to do the test.

You can test for radon by using both short term tests (two to 90 days) and long-term tests (more than 90 days). If you need results quickly, a short-term test followed by a second short-term test may be used. Long-term tests give a better understanding of radon levels in a home throughout the year.

The National Safety Council offers short- and long-term radon test kits and includes laboratory analysis and return postage. Kits can be ordered from the Helpline at (800) 557-2366. Download a coupon at www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html.

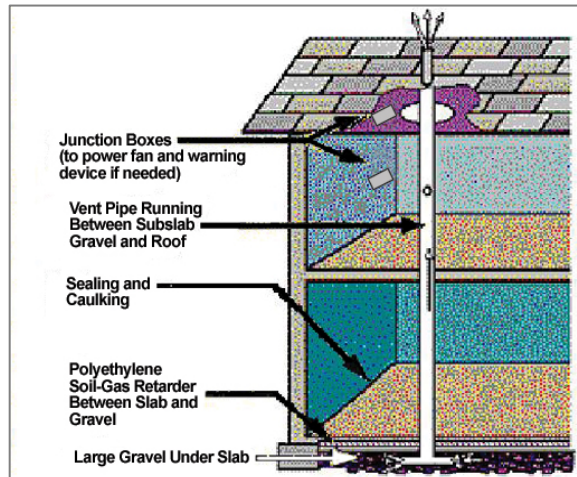
REDUCING RADON LEVELS

Radon cannot be removed or destroyed, but should be vented to outdoor air. Homes with radon test results at or above the recommended radon action level of 4 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) of air are considered high and should be fixed.

Seal cracks and openings in a building's foundation to prevent radon from entering. Open windows and use exhaust fans to reduce exposure until permanent ventilation improvements are completed. If necessary, a radon reduction system can be permanently installed.

To speak to a radon reduction expert, please contact the National Radon Proficiency Program, the leading certification program for radon professionals in the United States. They can be contacted through their Web site: at www.nhnrpp.org or by phone at (800) 269-4174.

SAMPLE RADON REDUCTION SYSTEM



The contractor should inspect your home's structure before giving you an estimate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Georgia Department of Public Health
Chemical Hazards Program
(404) 657-6534
www.health.state.ga.us/programs/hazards

The University of Georgia
Cooperative Extension
Radon Education Program
1-800-ASK-UGA1
www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/housing/radon

Southface Energy Institute
Outside Atlanta 1-800-745-0037
Atlanta Area 404-872-3549, Ext. #148
www.southface.org

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Radon Program
www.epa.gov/radon

RADON AND PUBLIC HEALTH



Environmental Health Branch

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

