RADON FACTS THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW IN DELAWARE, PENNSYLVANIA AND MARYLAND

Recently, a residence tested 3715 Pci/L (picocuries per liter) in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, which exceeded my wildest imagination. The EPA call for action level is 4 pci/L so finding a level that is well over 3,000 was shocking to say the least. We looked into the high levels our company has discovered and found elevated levels of radon in all the states we test, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Maryland.

A home we tested in Downingtown, Pennsylvania stood out with a radon level of 177 Pci/L. Yes, 177 Pci/L is very elevated. Another incident was when we were called out to test a home in Pennsylvania because the homeowner’s neighbor died from lung cancer. The neighbor’s house was tested and came back with a level of 100 Pci/L. The house that we tested also came out to a dangerous level, 50 Pci/L. So how long do you think they were living in that house not knowing that such a high level of radon was present in their home? The good news is that once a mitigation system was installed in the home we tested and the Downingtown home, they both tested well below the standard 4 Pci/L. This goes to show that a properly installed mitigation system can reduce even very high levels.

When considering Maryland, one story does come to mind but since we don’t have as much information, this will be anecdotal. We were called to test a home as the owner was suffering from lung cancer. Considering that she had not smoked in over 25 years, her doctor thought it was unlikely that it came from smoking. The woman’s home was on a slab so they were told when they purchased the home that a test was not needed because slab houses don’t generally have radon problems. The house tested 12 Pci/L which is three times the EPA standard for action. Any type of house, whether it has a basement or not, can have radon.

Data from the Delaware Radon Office showed recorded levels as high as 163 Pci/L in Newark and 138 Pci/L in Middletown. As a company, we have seen levels reaching 70 Pci/L in Middletown and Hockessin. We have witnessed many areas in Delaware, even areas like Garrisons Lake, Kent County, which was not known for radon, now have hot spots. Another case in point... an elevated level that has been recorded in lower Delaware was in Rehoboth, and that was over 9 Pci/L, more than double the EPA level of action. Upon finding that the radon level was high, the resident wanted to install a radon mitigation system but the Condo Association would not allow it because they were not convinced that there could be radon at the beach. The property was tested three times and each time the levels were high and the resident had to continue to breathe excessive levels of radon gas in his home during this testing period. According to the Delaware Radon Office, very high levels in Delaware are rare with less than 1% exceeding 10 Pci/L, and only a handful over 20 Pci/L. This should not discourage testing because there is no way to know that your home won’t be the latest record setter.

Please don’t risk your health and your family’s health. We have been testing for radon and installing mitigation systems for decades and the data shows that radon has been found
throughout the State of Delaware, certainly more concentrated in New Castle County, but as consumers are doing more testing in Kent and Sussex, they are finding elevated levels. The State of Delaware looked to implement a law that would require radon testing at the time of sale but the law was derailed because some believed that radon was non-existent in Sussex County. Since then, we have found new hot spots and reasons to consider required testing in not only Delaware, but Pennsylvania and Maryland as well. We hope that the government will consider required tests as we find more reasons every single day to test homes.

The requirements are in place in Delaware for radon testing, and you can contact the Delaware Radon Office for more information. Depending on funding, they may or may not offer free test kits. In Pennsylvania, the radon office of the DEP manages testing and remediation. There are no requirements or regulations regarding radon testing in the state of Maryland, but remediation companies are required to get a home renovation license.

The reasons for testing your home are far greater when compared to the cost of a $30.00 self-test kit. If you are buying a home, the cost will be somewhat higher (anywhere from $125-$175) because the test will be completed by a certified individual if it is required by your state. In a real estate transaction, if the conditions of the contract are followed, you can ask the seller to remediate the issue before you move in.

The EPA states that radon gas exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer closely following the number one cause, tobacco use. If you don’t smoke, why would you allow the cancer causing radon gas to go unchecked and if you do smoke and live in a house with elevated levels of radon, you are 15 times more likely to get lung cancer then if you did not smoke. Radon is not only in the air as it can also contaminate your well water. These levels in your water can be lowered with systems on the market, but there is no current standard for testing to be done. Some things are conjecture, but this simply is not. Test your home. It could save a life.