



**Monthly News Letter – May 2009
Radon**

“Radon” is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, heavy radioactive gas caused by the decay of uranium in soil, rock, and water. It is naturally occurring and is found through out the US in varying levels. Here in Montana, there is the potential for high levels in most of the state. It is found in our basements, crawlspaces, and even in ground water. It is reportedly the second most frequent cause of lung cancer next to cigarette smoking and said to cause thousands of deaths each year.

EPA designated January as National Radon Action Month, so it got me on the move to do something I had been intending to do for years “test my basement and home for Radon”. I went to Lowes and bought a Radon Test Kit. This was a 2 day closed house test and the result came back at 8.0 picocuries/ liter. The EPA recommends action or mediation if the level is above 4 pCi/L and one may want to consider action between 2 and 4. They also recommend a second test and to average the results of the two, which I did. This test kit was by made by a different manufacture and was a 4 day closed house test. The result was 8.9 pCi/L, so mediation is a must.

There are several ways to test your house for radon. The test kits sold at Lowes and Home Depot mentioned above are a good start. Test kits are available from the National Safety Council as well. You should also contact your state radon office which here in Montana is MT Department of Environmental Quality, Brian Green at 406-841-5230 or bgreen@mt.gov. They can provide a list of professionals for measuring and mitigating radon in your home. These professionals should follow the ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) standard practices for installing radon abatement systems. Also, You should go to the EPA’s website at www.epa.gov/radon. Here you will find lots of information for existing and new structures. It is important to have your home tested.

For new construction, I feel it is important to build with radon resistant techniques following the ASTM practices for radon control. It is inexpensive compared to cost of the mediation of an existing structure. We are using these techniques in our new construction to provide our customers with a safer home for the family and to avoid costly mediation if the home is ever sold.

If you have a construction related question, send me an email david@davidsimpsonconstruction.com and I will do my best to answer it.

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