

## ASHLAND COUNTY - CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Ashland  
County-City

medical  
reserve  
corps



1763 State Route 60 ▪ Floor C ▪ Ashland, Ohio 44805-8708  
419-282-4295 ▪ 419-282-4333 Fax

Ray Herbst, RS, REHS, Sherri Maneese, CGA,  
Gene Geraci, ATS, CCNA, Mary Derr, BSN, RN,

Linda McCarty, RN, Laura Hummel, RN, Comm. Specialist

Division of Public Health Emergency Preparedness,

Health Education, Health Promotion, Indoor Air Quality,

Ashland County-City Medical Reserve Corps, Public Information & Epidemiology

[rherbst@ashlandhealth.com](mailto:rherbst@ashlandhealth.com)

## **January 2012 is National Radon Action Month**

The Ashland County-City Health Department is making passive radon short-term test kits available to those residents that request them. Passive radon testing devices do not need power to function. These kits are exposed to the air in the home for a relatively short period of time and then sent to a laboratory for analysis.

This time in Ohio is the best for testing for radon because it is the easiest for maintaining closed dwelling conditions. All external doors, windows, and vents should be kept closed from 12 hours before starting the test and all the way through until the end of the test. You do not need to change your normal entry and exit routines, just make sure you that you close the door behind you. If your house has a permanently installed radon mitigation system, air to air heat exchanger, and/or combustion air supplies for furnaces, etc., they should be operated normally. However, do not operate any whole house fan or window fans during the test. This test should not be started if severe weather is predicted, such as a major storm system with winds in excess of 30 miles per hour.

When using any radon test kit, it is important that the air conditions within your dwelling remain as stable as possible throughout the duration of the test period. If the windows are opened, this will affect the test results. If a rainstorm occurs, this will also affect the test results. The proper placement of the test kits or measurement devices is critical to the accuracy of the overall test. If the test kits or measurement devices are disturbed during a test, it is important to note this.

When you receive the short-term kit from the health department, you will want to decide where to conduct the test. You will want to conduct the test in the lowest level of the dwelling that is used as a bedroom, play area, family room, den, exercise room, or workshop. Please **DO NOT** use the test kit in a closet, stairway, hallway, crawl space, or kitchen, laundry room, furnace room, or bathroom as these areas will either have high air velocity or high humidity and will throw off the test results. Basically what happens is that moisture in excess of 55% relative humidity may reduce the sensitivity of the radon measurement device.

To begin, you want to gently use a waterproof pen to **CLEARLY** print your name, complete

address, and then then circle the starting hour and day of the month, and the location of the test in your house. It is very important that this is clearly written.

You then want to insert the included foam filter into the "squared" opening of the packet. Push the foam in ONLY enough to fill the opening. Match up the top of the foam with the edge of the packet opening. Now hang the packet, from the hook provided, at your normal breathing level.

This sampler is designed to be exposed 72 to 168 hours (three to seven days). This means you must leave it in place for at least 3 days. You may expose it up to 7 days if you are not testing in a humid environment. Either way, your test result will be an average of approximately the last 4 days of the exposure period.

Test the lowest livable area of the building that is used on a regular basis. This is particularly important if only one test is being conducted, or if this is a follow-up test to confirm the need to mitigate for radon. Place the passive test kit where it will not be disturbed. The preferred method is to hang the sampler centrally in the room. Use one sampler for every 2000 square feet of floor space being tested. It should be within the normal breathing zone, that is, between 2 and 6 feet from the floor. The sampler may be hung from an interior non-masonry wall as long as the opening is not blocked (at least 4 inches clearance) and it is facing toward an open area of the room. String may be useful to hang the kit from the ceiling or light fixture. DO NOT place it in a draft. Keep it 3 feet or more from doorways, hallways, windows, exterior walls, and heating or air-conditioning vents. Do not place it in the same room with any type of operating fan or blower. Air blowing on or near this type of activated charcoal passive sampler may increase its sensitivity to radon. DO NOT place it near any heat source such as a stove, fireplace, or baseboard heater. Keep it out of direct sunlight. Heat may reduce the sensitivity of some radon measurement devices.

When the time for testing is over, while standing in the test area, you will want to remove and discard the foam-filter and then fold back the envelope flap at the top of the envelope. Follow that step by removing the adhesive's protective cover and press flaps together to seal. Make certain the packet is sealed air-tight. Repair any tears with a small piece of plastic tape. The test will be no good if there are unrepaired tears on the outside of the packet.

If the sample takes more than a week to get to the lab your test result will not be as accurate as one that arrived within three or four days. If the sample takes over 8 days to get to the lab, you will only get an estimated result. Over 11 days, NO result can be provided by the lab.

So, if you are a resident of Ashland County and would like to obtain a free radon test kit, leave a message at 419-282-4295 with your name, address and phone number and as the kits arrive in January, you will receive a call to let you know when to stop by to pick the kit up.