Kansas Radon Program
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A neighbor's radon reading cannot substitute for a reading in your home. Only testing can provide a level of confidence about potential radon exposures you face.

Test your home!

Radon in Home Buying and Selling

Radon testing during a real estate transaction

Radon testing may soon become a typical step in every real estate transaction. In many areas of the country it already is. Firms that handle employee relocation sales for large corporations almost universally require a radon test and, if necessary, that radon reduction work be done before taking possession of an employee's property.

Indeed, Kansas has adopted legislation related to radon, contained in K.S.A 58-3078a. As of July 1, 2009, all residential real property contracts in the state of Kansas will require the insertion of the following statement related to radon:

> ***"Every buyer of residential real property is notified that the property may present exposure to dangerous concentrations of indoor radon gas that may place occupants at risk of developing radon-induced lung cancer. Radon, a class-A human carcinogen, is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause overall. Kansas law requires sellers to disclose any information known to the seller that shows elevated concentrations of radon gas in residential real property. The Kansas department of health and environment recommends all home-buyers have an indoor radon test performed prior to purchasing or taking occupancy of residential real property. All testing for radon should be conducted by a radon measurement technician. Elevated radon concentrations can be easily reduced by a radon mitigation technician. For additional information go to www.kansasradonprogram.org."***

Additionally, as of July 1, 2011, the adoption of the Kansas Radon Certification Law (K.S.A. 2010 Supp. 48-16a01 through 48-16a12), all professional radon contractors and laboratories operating in Kansas must obtain a certification of qualification from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). A list of certified contractors is available at *www.kansasradonprogram.org*.

The only way to know if a home has a radon problem is to test. You can't predict radon levels based on location, foundation type, age of construction, tightness of house, or any other factor.

A joint Kansas Department of Health and Environment/ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency radon survey conducted across 1987-1988 found a statewide average indoor radon level of 3.2 picocuries of radon per liter of air (pCi/L). More than 25 percent of the homes measured had short-term (two-day average) radon levels greater than 4 pCi/l, a level that warrants further action. In some areas of Kansas, the percentage of homes with test results more than 4 pCi/l exceeded 40 percent.

Currently, the Kansas Radon Program's database of radon tests conducted in Kansas has greater than 50,000 measurements. The average observed residential radon test in Kansas is currently 4.8 pCi/L, or in excess of the EPA's action level of 4.0 pCi/L. The maximum reported radon value in Kansas to date is 260 pCi/L.

With approximately 800,000 single-family dwellings in Kansas, the potential exists for more than 200,000 houses to be candidates for radon-reduction work.

Buyers usually instigate the testing. If radon levels are unacceptably high (i.e.

"The best approach you can take as a homeowner is to conduct a short-term screening . . . ."

Surgeon General of the United States Health Advisory:

"Indoor radon gas is a national health problem. Radon causes thousands of deaths each year. Millions of homes have elevated radon levels. Most homes should be tested for radon. When elevated levels are confirmed, the problem should be corrected."

4 pCi/l or more), they want to know. The buyer may pay for the cost of the test but will usually expect the seller to pay for the radon-reduction system, if necessary. The buyer may also want to know radon levels in an area of the home the seller might not otherwise test.

The seller or realtor can be held legally liable when either one knows the radon level in a house or fails to reveal, in a reasonable fashion, information that may be important to a buyer making decisions.

The Kansas Radon Certification Law requires that you have the test conducted by a radon measurement professional certified by KDHE. A list of certified radon professionals for both radon measurement and mitigation can be obtained at *www.kansasradonprogram.org*. While the enabling statute for the Kansas Radon Certification Law allows a non-certified individual to perform a radon test for another person for no payment, such tests are prohibited by statute for homes involved in a real estate transaction.

Testing for radon and, if necessary, fixing a home that has a high level, may be stumbling blocks in the compressed time frame of real estate transactions. This is especially true if the issue is raised late in the process, such as the week before closing. Getting a reliable test that satisfies both buyer and seller is not difficult in most urban areas, but may be an obstacle in rural areas of Kansas if the issue is not raised early in the transaction.

If a reliable test comes back high and radon reduction work is needed, getting that work accomplished in the time before closing may be difficult, regardless of location.

Although radon mitigation costs the same as repairs for many other home-related problems, sellers may, due to inexperience, believe that radon problems are not as easily fixable and, as a result, may permanently threaten the value of the home even after all possible reduction has been accomplished.

This misconception has led to tampering with measurement devices or test conditions to achieve low test results.

Surveys have shown that radon does not significantly influence the value of homes once mitigation systems are installed.

The best approach you can take as a homeowner is to conduct a short-term (two to five days) measurement, preferably during the heating season. If the results are more than 4 pCi/l, follow up with either a long-term test or a second short-term test. The higher your initial short-term result, the more certain you can be that you should take a short-term rather than a long-term follow-up. Save the results so the information can be made available to a prospective buyer. Take action to reduce levels if the results are higher than 4 pCi/l. This will reduce your personal risk and the likelihood that radon will be a problem in the eventual sale of your home.

Advance testing makes disclosure to the buyer more convenient and may expedite the negotiating and sale or purchase process. The long-term test results will give the best indication of health risk and will avoid having to rely on a last moment short-term test, which is more susceptible to tampering.

If a seller refuses to include a radon reduction system as part of the purchase contract, buyers should be aware that they have the opportunity to correct the radon problem after purchase. Typically radon reduction systems cost much the same as other home repairs (from $800 to $2,000).

For a list of radon measurement and mitigation contractors and a description of guidelines the contractors should follow, call the Kansas Radon Program at 800.693.5343 or visit *www.kansasradonprogram.org*.