



M E D I A R E L E A S E
STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

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Governor Bredesen Proclaims January “Radon Action Month”
Environment and Conservation Kicks Off Education Efforts

NASHVILLE - Governor Phil Bredesen has proclaimed January “Radon Action Month” to help educate Tennesseans about the dangers of radon exposure and encourage actions to identify and to address radon problems in the home.

In conjunction with the Governor’s announcement, the Department of Environment and Conservation has joined forces with the American Lung Association, the Environmental Protection Agency and various local and county health departments with an outreach program to raise awareness about this health risk and the importance of testing.

“Tennesseans can check for the presence of radon in the home with a simple test,” said Bredesen. “I encourage each household to take this important step to safeguard the health of loved ones from the dangers of exposure to radon.”

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that can seep into homes through cracks and openings in their foundations. It cannot be seen, tasted or smelled, but in concentrated levels, radon can pose a threat to human health. The EPA estimates that approximately 70 percent of Tennessee’s population lives in high risk or moderate risk radon areas. According to the EPA, radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

The best time to test is during consistently cold weather, usually from October to March. This is the time of year when doors and windows are shut, so test results are more representative of in-home exposure. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost comparable to that of many common household repairs, such as painting or installing a new water heater.

In Tennessee, radon test kits can be purchased at most local hardware and home improvement stores, through the American Lung Association or by calling the Tennessee Radon Hotline at 1-800-232-1139. Limited quantities of free test kits are available. In addition, Tennesseans can have access to a free radon test kit within their county by visiting their local county Ground Water Protection office.

“Testing is such an important step because radon acts unpredictably,” said Amy Inabinet of the Tennessee Radon Program. “Nationally, about 6 percent of homes surveyed had elevated levels of radon. In contrast, 16 percent of Tennessee homes surveyed had elevated levels and in some counties, 33 to 75 percent of homes being tested have elevated levels of radon.”

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), and the EPA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend homes with radon levels at 4 pCi/L or higher should be fixed. EPA also recommends that Americans consider fixing their homes for radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L.

For more information, visit Environment and Conservation’s Web site at www.tn.gov/environment/ea/radon or contact the department’s Radon Program at 1-800-232-1139 or TDEC.Radon@state.tn.us.

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