

## What is radon?

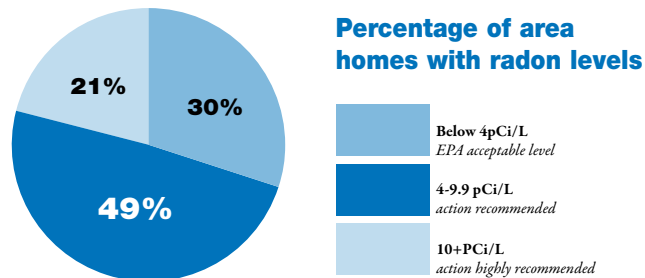
Radon is an invisible, odorless, radioactive gas created during the natural decay of uranium in the soil. Radon is everywhere, and Colorado has higher concentrations than other regions. Typical negative pressure inside a home pulls radon gas in through cracks and openings in basements, crawl spaces, and slabs. Radon levels vary from house to house and have nothing to do with age, quality, or upkeep of the home.

## Why is radon a concern?

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, "Indoor radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Breathing radon over prolonged periods can present a significant health risk to families all over the country. It's important to know that this threat is completely preventable. Radon can be detected with a simple test and fixed through well-established venting techniques." The Environmental Protection Agency recommends homes be mitigated if the radon level is 4 pCi/L (pico Curies per Liter) or more. Because there is no known safe exposure level, EPA also recommends you consider mitigating your home for radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L. Note also that smokers have much higher risk of lung cancer if they are also exposed to radon.

## What are radon levels in Fort Collins?

Thousands of Fort Collins homes have been tested for radon. Test results indicate that 70% of Fort Collins homes have radon levels of 4 pCi/L or above. But don't let these numbers scare you away from Colorado – radon is a problem that can be fixed. Test for radon in your home!



**Cultural, Parks, Recreational,  
and Environmental Services**  
Natural Resources Department  
PO Box 580  
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**Radon**  
*Buying and Selling*  
**a Home in Fort Collins**



## Short-term test kits

These measure radon for 3-7 days – a good choice if you need a quick radon test. But this test is simply a “snapshot” of the radon levels during the test period. Radon levels vary with the season, barometric pressure, wind, and whether windows are open or closed. A short-term test does not reflect the average radon level over time.



## Long-term test kits



These measure radon for three months to a year – a good choice to find the average level of radon in your home. Use long-term test results after you move in to decide whether to install a radon reduction system.

## How do I test for radon?

There are two approaches to measure radon:

1. Test it yourself. The City sells radon-testing kits (\$3.50 for short-term, \$13.95 for long-term) at two locations during regular business hours:
  - Fort Collins Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive
  - Fort Collins Development Review Center, 281 North College Ave.
2. Hire a professional tester. We recommend that you use a professional certified by the National Environmental Health Association (see [www.radongas.org](http://www.radongas.org)) or the National Radon Safety Board (see [www.nrsb.org](http://www.nrsb.org)). You can find radon professionals in the phone book under Radon Testing or Radon Mitigation.

## New homes and radon

Fort Collins homes built in 2005 or later must incorporate radon-resistant new construction methods. The required system uses passive ventilation and provides for easy addition of a radon exhaust fan, if needed. Testing has shown the passive system reduces radon by half, on average. However, 35% of new homes still exceed 4 pCi/L with the required passive system installed. You should conduct a radon test, and install a fan if radon levels are unacceptable.

## Existing homes and radon

No matter what the age of your future home, take time to test radon levels. What if your dream home has high radon levels? If you like a home, buy it – radon can be reduced! Of all the problems that a house can have, radon is one of the most easy to identify and fix. And you can fix it before you buy or after you move in.

## Is radon testing or mitigation required?

The City does not require any testing, but does require radon-resistant new construction [see above]. City Code also requires that sellers provide a copy of this brochure to each buyer of residential property (prior to execution of a contract to buy). The “seller” may be an agent, homeowner, attorney, or other person acting on behalf of the seller.

## How can radon levels be reduced?

Don't despair if you find elevated radon concentrations in your home! Radon levels can be reduced by installing a radon mitigation system. A plastic pipe is connected to the soil beneath a slab, basement, or crawl space floor and then extended above the roof. An in-line fan draws radon and other soil gases up the pipe and exhausts them harmlessly outdoors. Incidentally, this system can also help dry out a damp basement, because it draws out humidity as well as radon.

## For more radon information:

City of Fort Collins  
Natural Resources Dept.  
970-221-6600  
[www.fcgov.com/radon](http://www.fcgov.com/radon)

