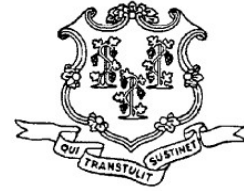


News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 20, 2010

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CT Residents Urged to Test Homes for Radon, the Leading Cause of Lung Cancer in Non-Smokers

Testing for Radon Gas is Simple and Inexpensive

Hartford —The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is urging Connecticut residents to test their homes for radon gas, the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers in the United States. Governor M. Jodi Rell has designated January as *Radon Action Month* in Connecticut.

Radon, a naturally-occurring radioactive gas formed from the natural decay of uranium, is found in rock, soil and water. While radon in outdoor air poses a relatively low threat to human health, radon can enter homes from the surrounding soil, and accumulate to harmful levels inside buildings.

“Radon is present at elevated levels in about one out of every five homes in Connecticut,” stated DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A. “However, because you can’t see or smell radon, people often are unaware that there might be a silent killer in their homes.”

Radon gas can be found in any home or building, including schools and offices. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon, but never before has there been such overwhelming evidence that exposure to elevated levels of radon increases a person’s risk of developing lung cancer. DPH and the United States Environmental Protection Agency recommend that homes with radon levels at 4.0 pCi/L or higher should be fixed. However, radon exposure at any level poses some health risk; therefore, homeowners may want to consider reducing radon levels that are greater than 2.0 pCi/L.

Federal health officials estimate that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. Breathing radon over prolonged periods can present a significant health risk. If you smoke and your home has radon, your risk of lung cancer can be higher. Because radon does not have an odor or cause symptoms, you may not know you are exposed. As such, all Connecticut homes should be tested for radon and action should be taken to reduce high levels.

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Testing homes for radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased from the American Lung Association of New England for \$12. Simply call 1-800-LUNG-USA or 860-289-5401 and order yours today.

If you have elevated radon levels in your home, don't panic. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified radon contractors for approximately \$1,200. A homeowner should hire a qualified radon mitigation (reduction) contractor to decrease airborne radon levels to at least below 4.0 pCi/L, and preferably below 2.0 pCi/L. Visit the CT DPH website for a list of qualified radon mitigation contractors.

To learn more about *radon*, visit the DPH Radon Program web site at www.ct.gov/dph/radon or call (860) 509-7367. You can also visit the EPA web site at www.epa.gov/radon

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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