

News release

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All Oregonians urged to test homes for radon

Testing is inexpensive, easy and saves lives

The Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division has developed maps that show where high levels of radon can be found around the state.

The OHA's Radon Program recently collected radon test data from radon test kit manufacturers. The data show that some areas of the state have particularly high levels of radon.

"For example, Portland has a particularly high percentage of homes with radon levels over the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's action level," says Brett Sherry, program manager of the Healthy Homes & Schools program. "The data show that one out of four homes tested in Portland has high radon levels. Luckily, homes with high radon levels can be fixed."

The Radon Program and OHA's Environmental Public Health Tracking Program worked with Portland State University's Geology Department to develop radon maps for the state. The maps were generated using the data supplied by test kit manufacturers, and are posted on the [Radon Program website](#). Those using the site can also find a list of radon test results by ZIP code.

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The maps also reveal large swaths of the state where no radon information is available. “This is concerning to us,” says Sherry, “because residents in these areas may have high levels of radon in their homes and not be aware of it.” The only way to know for sure if your home has high levels of radon is to test it. This is why Sherry recommends that all homes be tested for radon.

The Oregon Radon Program is working with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to educate people about the dangers of radon and to urge people to test their homes.

Radon is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer after smoking and kills more than 21,000 Americans every year. Radon is a radioactive gas, and like all other forms of radiation, you can't see, smell or taste it. But radon could be in your home at dangerous levels.

Radon, a naturally occurring gas that comes from the ground, can be found throughout Oregon. It can get into any type of building or home and can build up to unsafe levels. People are most likely to get their greatest exposure at home, where they spend most of their time.

Testing homes for radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores, or directly from radon testing companies. Many test kits are priced between \$10 and \$25. The American Lung Association in Oregon (ALAO) offer test kits for \$14, which includes the cost of shipping, handling and analysis.

Residents who find high radon levels in their homes can contact a qualified contractor to fix the problem. Visit the Oregon Radon Program's [website](#) for a list of qualified contractors in Oregon as well as a link to ALAO test kits.

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A law passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2010 created building codes that minimize radon entry into new residential structures built in Baker, Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, Polk, Washington and Yamhill counties. The law took effect on April 1, 2011. These requirements also apply to all new public buildings in those counties, including schools, effective April 1, 2013.

For more information about radon, call the Oregon Radon Program at 971-673-0440 or visit Oregon Radon Program's [website](#) or EPA's [website](#).

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