

Radon Testing Preparation Checklist

Everything you need to do before, during, and after a professional radon test

- ✓ Pre-test preparation checklist (closed-building conditions)
- ✓ What happens during testing — step by step
- ✓ Understanding your results and EPA action levels
- ✓ Post-test action plan: mitigation decision guide

Pre-Test Preparation Checklist

12+ Hours Before Testing (Closed-Building Conditions):

- ☐ Close ALL windows and exterior doors (keep closed through entire test period)
- ☐ Close all fireplace dampers
- ☐ Turn off whole-house fans, attic fans, and window fans
- ☐ Normal HVAC operation is OK — keep heating/AC running as usual
- ☐ Do NOT operate fireplaces, wood stoves, or gas logs during testing
- ☐ Normal entry/exit through doors is fine — just close doors immediately after use

Day of Tester's Arrival

- ☐ Ensure lowest livable level is accessible (basement, ground floor)
- ☐ Clear a flat surface 2-4 feet off the ground in the test area (table, shelf, or counter)
- ☐ Move test area away from exterior walls (at least 20 inches), windows, drafts, and direct sunlight
- ☐ Remove fans, air purifiers, or humidifiers from the test area
- ☐ Keep pets away from the testing device
- ☐ Provide the tester access to all levels of the home if multi-floor testing is planned

During the Test Period

- ☐ Maintain closed-building conditions throughout the entire test
- ☐ Do NOT tamper with, move, or touch the testing device
- ☐ Do NOT operate the fireplace, wood stove, or gas logs
- ☐ Continue normal daily activities — cooking, showering, and regular door use are fine

- ☐ Avoid running whole-house ventilation fans

Critical for Real Estate Tests

Closed-building conditions must be maintained for at least 12 hours BEFORE the test begins AND throughout the entire 48-hour testing period. If conditions are compromised, the test results may be invalidated — potentially delaying a closing.

What to Expect During Testing

The Professional Radon Test — Step by Step

Step-by-step visual

- 1 Pre-test assessment (5-10 min):** Tester walks the home, identifies lowest livable level, confirms closed-building conditions have been maintained, notes foundation type (slab, basement, crawlspace).
- 2 Device placement (5-10 min):** Continuous radon monitor (CRM) placed in lowest livable area on a stable surface, 2-4 feet off the floor, 20+ inches from exterior walls. Device activated and recording begins.
- 3 Tamper measures applied (5 min):** For real estate transactions, tester applies tamper-evident tape/seals and activates motion detection on the CRM. Documents placement with photos.
- 4 Testing period (48-96 hours):** Device records hourly radon levels, temperature, humidity, and barometric pressure. No action needed from homeowner — just maintain closed-building conditions.
- 5 Device retrieval (5-10 min):** Tester returns, verifies tamper seals are intact, checks device data, and retrieves the CRM.
- 6 Report generation (same day to 48 hours):** Tester downloads data, generates report with average radon level, hourly graph, and comparison to EPA action levels.
- 7 Results delivered:** Written report provided to client and, for real estate transactions, to the requesting agent or attorney.

Total disruption to your daily life

Minimal. The tester visits twice (10-15 minutes each). You just need to keep windows closed and the fireplace off for 2-4 days. Normal living continues.

Understanding Your Results

How to Read Your Radon Test Report

Key metrics explained

Report Element	What It Means	Why It Matters
Average radon level (pCi/L)	The average concentration over the test period	Compared against EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/L
Hourly readings graph	Shows radon fluctuation throughout the test	Normal variation is expected; spikes are OK if average is acceptable
Barometric pressure data	Atmospheric conditions during test	Low pressure can increase radon entry; noted for context
Temperature / humidity	Environmental conditions	Extreme conditions may affect results
Tamper indicator	Whether device was moved or conditions changed	Essential for real estate validity
Test duration	Total hours of data collection	Minimum 48 hours for valid short-term test

Result interpretation guide

Your Average Result	What It Means	What to Do Next
Below 2.0 pCi/L	Low risk — below outdoor average in many areas	No action. Retest every 2–5 years.
2.0–3.9 pCi/L	Moderate — below EPA action level	EPA says "consider fixing." Retest with long-term kit for confirmation.
4.0–7.9 pCi/L	Above EPA action level	Mitigate within several months. Get 2–3 mitigation quotes.
8.0+ pCi/L	Significantly elevated	Mitigate promptly. Consider limiting time in lowest level until system installed.

Short-term vs. long-term averages

A 48-hour test is a snapshot. Radon levels fluctuate seasonally (higher in winter, lower in summer). If your short-term result is 3.0-4.5 pCi/L, consider a 90-day alpha-track test to confirm the annual average before committing to mitigation.

Post-Test Decision Flowchart

What to Do After You Get Your Results

Decision tree

Result below 2.0 pCi/L?

- No action needed.
- Retest every 2-5 years, or after major renovations, foundation work, or changes in home ventilation.

Result 2.0-3.9 pCi/L?

- EPA says "consider fixing."
- Confirm with a long-term (90+ day) test. If long-term average is above 4.0, mitigate. If below, monitor every 2 years.

Result 4.0 pCi/L or above?

- Mitigation recommended.
- **Step 1:** Get 2-3 quotes from certified radon mitigation professionals (NRPP or NRSB certified for mitigation).
- **Step 2:** Verify each contractor's mitigation certification separately from measurement certification.
- **Step 3:** Typical installation: 4-8 hours, \$800-\$2,500.
- **Step 4:** Post-mitigation test required (48-hr CRM, \$100-\$200) to verify system reduced levels below 4.0 pCi/L.
- **Step 5:** Retest every 2 years to confirm ongoing effectiveness.

Real estate specific

- Result above 4.0 → Negotiate with seller for mitigation installation or price credit (\$800-\$2,500)
- Most sellers agree to mitigate rather than lose the sale
- Insist on post-mitigation verification test before closing

Radon Basics: What Every Homeowner Should Know

Radon 101 — The Essential Facts

Key facts

Fact	Detail
What is radon?	A naturally occurring radioactive gas produced by the decay of uranium in soil, rock, and groundwater. Invisible, odorless, tasteless.
How does it enter homes?	Through cracks in foundations, gaps around pipes, sump pits, construction joints, and crawlspaces. Any home can have elevated radon.
Health risk	#2 cause of lung cancer (after smoking). EPA estimates 21,000 lung cancer deaths/year from radon. Risk increases with exposure level and duration.
Who is at risk?	Everyone — but smokers exposed to radon have 10x the lung cancer risk of non-smokers exposed to the same levels.
Can you smell it?	No. Radon is completely undetectable without testing.
Does new construction prevent it?	Not necessarily. New homes with radon-resistant features still need testing. Passive systems may need activation.
Does it affect well water?	Yes. Radon can dissolve in groundwater and be released when water is used. Aeration or GAC treatment removes waterborne radon.

The EPA recommends testing ALL homes

— regardless of age, foundation type, or geographic location. Radon levels vary house by house, even among adjacent homes in the same neighborhood.

Seasonal Testing Guide & Long-Term Monitoring

When to Test and How Often

Seasonal considerations

Season	Radon Behavior	Testing Notes
Winter	Highest indoor levels — stack effect pulls soil gas in; windows closed	Best time for worst-case measurement; standard testing season
Spring	Declining levels; ground thaw can cause temporary spikes	Good testing period; ground moisture may affect levels
Summer	Generally lowest levels — open windows, less stack effect	Tests may understate annual average; still valid
Fall	Rising levels as heating season begins	Good baseline period

Testing frequency recommendations

Situation	EPA/AARST Recommendation
Never tested	Test immediately
Previous result below 2.0 pCi/L	Retest every 2–5 years
Previous result 2.0–3.9 pCi/L	Retest with long-term kit; monitor every 2 years
Active mitigation system	Retest every 2 years to verify system performance
After major renovation	Retest — foundation work, new HVAC, or additions can change radon entry
After severe weather/ earthquake	Retest — ground shifts can open new pathways
Buying a new home	Always test, even if previous test exists

Long-term tests are the gold standard for homeowners.

A 90-day to 12-month alpha-track detector (\$25-\$50) gives you the most accurate annual average. Use it between real estate transactions for ongoing peace of mind.

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1. ****Printability matters.**** Homebuyers and agents print these. Avoid large solid color areas on interior pages (waste ink). Reserve full-bleed backgrounds for cover and back cover only. 2. ****Tables are the star.**** These guides live or die on their reference tables. Make tables scannable, well-spaced, and easy to read at 100% zoom on screen AND when printed on letter paper. 3. ****Checklist pages sh**

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