



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 1-31, 2008 is National Radon Action Month Livingston County Department of Public Health offers Free Radon Test Kits

HOWELL, Michigan. – January 2, 2008 (Livingston County Department of Public Health) January is Radon Action Month – an opportune time for Americans to test for radon in their homes. Radon is a health risk facing millions of Americans. The Livingston County Department of Public Health (LCDPH) joins with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in a major campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to identify and fix radon problems.

Because families are spending more time indoors during the winter months, January is a good time to test for this radioactive, invisible, odorless gas. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. EPA estimates that approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year are radon-related. Radon comes from the natural (radioactive) breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water and gets into the air you breathe. Radon enters buildings through openings in the foundation floor or walls (sump openings, crawlspaces, floor/wall joints, cracks, etc.). Radon can become trapped in buildings, and thus, lead to elevated and harmful radon levels.

One in eight Michigan homes is likely to have an elevated radon level. According to a study conducted by the MDEQ, radon is present in elevated levels in about 20% of Livingston County homes. Radon is tasteless, odorless, and colorless, and it has no warning symptoms (it does not cause headaches, nausea, fatigue, etc.).

Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon.

LCDPH is offering free short-term radon test kits for the month of January. Test kits are available at the Environmental Health Division Office, located at 2300 East Grand River, Howell, MI. EPA recommends that houses with radon levels of 4 picocuries per liter or more of radon should be fixed to prevent accumulation of the gas indoors. Radon test kits are also available for purchase at local hardware stores, home improvement centers, some supermarkets or directly from a laboratory. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs, such as painting or having a new water heater installed (anywhere from \$500 to about \$2,500).

For more radon information, contact the Livingston County Department of Public Health at (517) 546-9858, the State of Michigan Radon Program at 1-800-RADON-GAS, or the National Radon Information Line at (800) SOS-RADON. Radon information can also be accessed via the web at www.lchd.org or www.epa.gov/iaq/radon/rnactionmonth.html.

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