

Radon Resistant Home Construction

The DEQ encourages new home buyers to test their homes for radon, as the colorless, odorless gas is not just a problem in older existing homes, but can be a problem in newly-built homes as well.

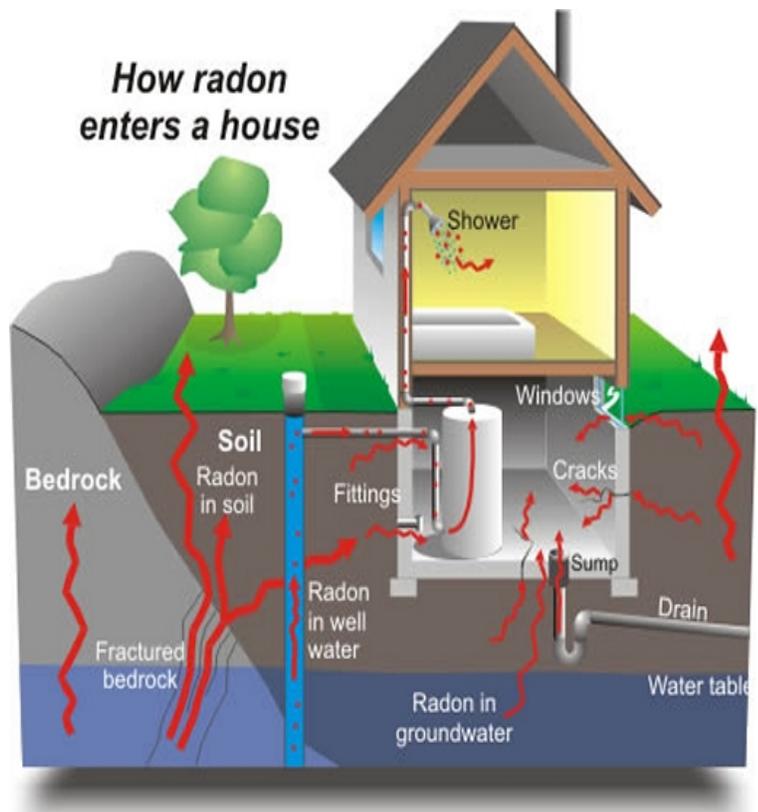
Radon-resistant new construction (RRNC) is an excellent practice that can help lower the potential for a radon problem in a new home, however it doesn't guarantee low levels, so it's important for these homes to still be tested.

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in soil and rock, and it is believed to be the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Radon can accumulate to unhealthy levels when it leaks into a home through foundation openings, and the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency estimates that it results in approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year. Studies project that more than 600 of those lung cancers occur in Michigan alone.

RRNC involves installing a passive vent pipe during the construction process that would, under ideal conditions, allow the gas to bypass the house and exhaust above the roof where it can be quickly diluted and dispersed in the atmosphere. In some cases the passive system is successful at getting the radon down to acceptable levels, but if a test shows the home still has high radon levels, the techniques allow for easy and inexpensive installation of a fan for increased radon reduction in the home.

RRNC is required by code in nine high-radon potential counties (Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Hillsdale, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lenawee, St. Joseph, and Washtenaw). Though builders in other counties are not required to use radon-resistant construction techniques, some are voluntarily adopting the process. Where that is not the case, buyers can ask their builder to incorporate the techniques into the building process.





environmental spotlight

Do-it-yourself radon test kits are available from local health departments, as well as from some home improvement centers and hardware stores. They can also be purchased online at <http://mi.radon.com> or from any number of other online vendors.

If a third-party test is desired, the DEQ recommends using a nationally certified professional. Lists of certified radon measurement professionals are available from the National Environmental Health Association (<http://www.radongas.org>), the National Radon Safety Board (<http://www.nrsb.org>), the DEQ, or your local health department.

For more detailed information about radon and radon-resistant home construction, visit the DEQ Web site at www.michigan.gov/deqradon or call the DEQ Radon Program at 1-800-RADON-GAS (1-800-723-6642) for a free packet of information.