Radon and Real Estate Transactions

Testing for Radon in Real Estate Transactions

More and more people who want to buy a home are asking for radon testing along with the whole-house inspection. This is a natural desire to ensure that the home they purchase is safe for the family to live in. This test is common and easy to do. However, the process differs when compared to the testing that a current homeowner does in his or her own home.

All radon testing in a real estate transaction should be done by a licensed radon measurement professional [http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/MeasurementBusinessesReport.pdf](http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/MeasurementBusinessesReport.pdf) to ensure a quality, unbiased, third-party test. Most professionals use tamper-resistant equipment, ensuring that nothing happens to disturb the test. Using a professional often means that there is no question about the accuracy of a test result.

This Test Might Be Different

When a test takes place for a real estate transaction, there are some minor differences from how a homeowner currently living in the home would test.

- A licensed professional should conduct the test. While most sellers are honest people, unfortunately there are some who would attempt to tamper with a radon test to ensure a low result. For this reason, a third party, quality-assured test is important. This gives peace of mind for both parties; it also ensures that there is no question about the results.

- The testing professional will place the test device in the lowest, livable level of the home, no matter whether or not your family currently spends time there. Even if the space is unfinished, if it is possible that a new family could utilize it for some purpose, it will be chosen as the testing location.

- There will be only one test. A current homeowner often uses a “do-it-yourself” test kit that gives a screening level, and then follows up with a second test to confirm the initial results. For a real estate transaction, because a professional uses a more sophisticated device, there will be only one test. That result will be the basis of a decision on whether the home needs mitigation.
Testing Information for Sellers

Test If You Haven't Already

If you are thinking about putting your home on the market to sell, and have not tested it for radon, consider having a test done as a proactive measure. This could help to save time during the period around closing. As mentioned above, a licensed radon professional should perform the test to ensure that a potential buyer trusts the results.

Disclosure Laws If You Have Already Tested

If you have tested your home before, the law requires you to disclose that information to a potential buyer. There is a spot on the real estate disclosure form for radon information. You can find more information at the Nebraska Real Estate Commission.

Testing Information for Buyers

If The Home Has Already Been Tested

If the home you are considering to purchase has already been tested, ask to see a copy of the test result. All tests come with a report that indicates, along with other information:

- The dates of testing;
- The result of testing, and;
- The address where the test occurred.

A potential buyer should see this information to determine whether to accept those results, or to hire a professional to conduct an updated test. Some potential reasons to have another test conducted are:

- Time since previous test
- Renovations, alterations, or new heating/cooling equipment since previous test
- Location of previous test (i.e. on the ground floor instead of the basement)

Request a Radon Test

If there has not been a radon test for the home you are considering to purchase, request such a test. Nebraska has a high prevalence of radon. Out of all homes tested, 59% have results above the action level; see Radon in Nebraska. Even if you are in a county or city with a low average level of radon, there is still a good chance that the specific home you’re considering will have a high radon level. The only way to know is to test.
Hire a Licensed Radon Professional

A potential buyer should not rely on the seller to conduct an accurate radon test. In a real estate transaction, a licensed radon measurement professional should perform all radon testing. This will ensure a quality, unbiased, third party test. Most professionals have tamper-resistant equipment, ensuring that nothing happens to disturb the test. Using a professional often means that there is no question about the accuracy of a test result.

If Radon Levels Are High

If the radon test result is equal to or higher than 4.0 pCi/L (the action level), then the home should be mitigated. The buyer and the seller can negotiate between them as to who will pay the cost of mitigation, just as any issue identified during a home inspection. The seller may have the radon mitigation system installed. On the other hand, the buyer may ask to have the asking price lowered so that they can control the installation (i.e. who installs it, how it is designed, etc).

No matter who pays the cost, a licensed radon professional must install the mitigation system. In addition, a “post-test” must take place to show that the radon level has gone down to below the action level. The post-test information should be shared with both parties before closing.

For More Information

Please refer to the Radon Program's Index Page, [http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/radon_index.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/radon_index.aspx), or contact us using the information provided below:

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