



**SAGINAW COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**  
*protecting and promoting the public's health since 1928*

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:** Chris Klawuhn, R.S., M.S.A.  
**TITLE:** Environmental Health Services Director  
**PHONE:** (989) 758-3684  
**EMAIL:** [cklawuhn@saginawcounty.com](mailto:cklawuhn@saginawcounty.com)

**JANUARY IS RADON ACTION MONTH**

Free Test Kits Available at Saginaw County Department of Public Health

Governor Rick Snyder has proclaimed January 2017 as Radon Action Month in Michigan and the Saginaw County Department of Public Health (SCDPH) is distributing **free radon test kits** in observance of this event.

Chris Klawuhn, SCDPH Environmental Health Services Director, explains: "An important way to protect our families' health is to get radon gas out of our homes." All area residents are encouraged to get a kit and test their homes over the next few weeks and, as necessary, to take action to reduce their exposure.

Radon is a tasteless, odorless, colorless, radioactive gas found in almost any kind of soil and rock. It travels through the ground and enters buildings through cracks and openings in the foundation floor or walls, including floor/wall joints, sump openings, and other penetrations caused by plumbing, wiring, or ductwork. Outdoors, it is diluted by the atmosphere, but indoors it tends to be more concentrated and can accumulate to unhealthy levels. Exposure over time can increase one's risk of contracting lung cancer.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and is the leading cause among nonsmokers. It is a significant environmental health threat that can be easily detected. When elevated radon levels are found, additional testing should be done to confirm the problem, and then steps can be taken to lower the radon levels.

If a house is found to have radon levels at or above the danger zone of 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter), homeowners should contact a radon mitigation contractor to correct the problem. Fixing high radon levels doesn't require major home remodeling, but can include installing a fan and ventilation system to circulate the radon outdoors, sealing the cracks in foundations which allow radon to enter the home, or using soil reduction techniques in order to remove radon from the earth surrounding the house.

Some newer homes have been built with anti-radon features already installed.

Klawuhn points out that a statewide survey indicates that elevated levels of radon would be expected in one out of eight homes in Michigan. “Unfortunately, there is no way to predict which homes will have the problem. The only way to know is to test.”

Testing is easy and inexpensive. The best time to test is in winter months when people keep their windows and doors closed. The do-it-yourself test kits distributed by the health department are free only in the month of January. Kits are available from the **Environmental Health Services Division**, 1600 N. Michigan Avenue, in Room 101, as well as at the **Rehmann Health Center**, 147 S. Saginaw Street in Chesaning.

Test kits may also be available from some hardware stores or home improvement centers, but not all include postage and analysis, so citizens are urged to read the packaging before making their purchase. Kits are available for \$9.95 online at <http://mi.radon.com>.

For more information, call Environmental Health Services at (989) 758-3686 or visit [www.saginawpublichealth.org](http://www.saginawpublichealth.org). The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality also has a toll-free number at 1-800-RADON GAS (1-800-723-6642). Be wise. Be well.

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