



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RADON ACTION WEEK

Kingsford, Michigan – October 7, 2008. National Radon Action Week will be observed the week of October 19-25, 2008. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department encourages everyone to test their home for radon because radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer among smokers and the leading cause among non-smokers.

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that comes from the natural breakdown (radioactive decay) of uranium. Uranium is a common element in the soil. The major source of radon detected in a home is the soil surrounding the residence that may contain uranium, granite, shale, phosphate and pitchblende. The radon gas from the soil can enter a home or building through dirt floors, hollow-block walls, cracks in the basement floor and walls, and openings around floor drains, pipes and sump pumps.

Radon problems have been identified in every state, and the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 1 in 15 homes have elevated radon levels. In some Dickinson and Iron County homes, radon levels were detected at levels higher than the recommended level.

Radon levels are measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). No level of radon is considered absolutely safe; however the EPA recommends that action be taken when indoor levels are above 4pCi/L.

Testing for radon is easy and relatively inexpensive. If elevated levels are detected, it may be feasible to reduce these levels with minimal expense.

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There are two types of radon test kits available from the Health Department; a charcoal, and the alpha track detector. **During radon action week, both of these devices can be purchased at half their normal price.** (Charcoal \$4.50, Alpha \$11.00)

The charcoal kit is to be used to measure short-term exposure (3 to 7 days) and tests for the presence or absence of radon gas. The alpha track detector is for long-term exposure (7 months to a year) and if radon gas is present, it will provide the homeowner with actual daily exposure to the gas.

The charcoal kits are good for testing areas of up to 800 square feet. If your basement is unfinished and larger than 800 square feet, you may want to consider purchasing two kits. If your basement is finished and smaller than 800 square feet, then only one charcoal test kit is necessary.

For more information on the test kits or radon, please contact either office of the Health Department at (906) 779-7239 or (906) 265-9913.

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