

Why Radon Testing York County Matters for Your Home

If you live in York County, you have probably heard about radon gas at some point. Maybe a neighbor mentioned it during a home inspection, or you saw a test kit at the hardware store. But the truth is, radon is not just a casual concern here. Pennsylvania has some of the highest radon levels in the country, and York County sits right in a zone where elevated readings are common. I have seen homes where the concentration was more than ten times the EPA action level, and the owners had no idea until they tested.

Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from the natural decay of uranium in soil and rock. It is invisible, odorless, and tasteless. The only way to know if it is inside your home is to measure it. That is where radon testing York County becomes a practical step, not just a precaution. I have been doing this work for years, and I can tell you that skipping the test is a gamble that does not pay off.



What Radon Does and Why York County Is Vulnerable

When radon gas seeps into a home, it gets trapped and builds up over time. Breathing it in exposes your lung tissue to radiation, and the EPA considers it the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. The geology in this part of Pennsylvania includes a lot of granite, shale, and limestone, all of which contain uranium. That means the ground beneath your basement or crawl space can produce radon for centuries.

Homes here often have basements, block walls, and sump pumps, all of which create radon entry points. Cracks in the slab, gaps around pipes, and even the porous nature of concrete allow the gas to move upward. A house acts like a vacuum cleaner, pulling radon from the soil through every tiny opening. Without a radon test kit or a professional measurement, you are essentially flying blind.

The Right Way to Test for Radon

There are two main approaches to testing: short-term and long-term. A short-term test usually lasts two to seven days and uses a charcoal canister or an alpha track detector. It gives you a quick snapshot, which is useful if you are in the middle of a real estate transaction or just want a baseline number. A long-term test runs for 90 days to a year and gives a much more accurate average because radon levels can fluctuate with weather, season, and how often you run the heating or cooling system.



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Many homeowners grab a radon test kit from the store, set it in the basement for a few days, and send it off to a lab. That is a good start, but it is not the whole picture. The test needs to be placed in the lowest lived-in level of the house, away from drafts, heat sources, and exterior walls. You also have to keep windows and doors closed as much as possible during the test period, except for normal entry and exit. If the test is placed in a finished basement that you use every day, that is fine. But placing it in an unfinished crawl space that you never enter might not reflect what you actually breathe.

Professional [radon testing York County](#) services, like the ones Dan Jenkins offers, take the guesswork out of placement and timing. A certified radon mitigator knows where to put the detector, how long to run it, and how to interpret the results. They also check for conditions

that could skew the reading, such as an operating fan unit that might artificially lower the radon concentration during the test.

What the Numbers Mean

The EPA has set an action level at 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). If your test comes back at or above that, the EPA recommends fixing the problem. Many homes in York County test between 4 and 20 pCi/L, and I have personally measured readings above 100 pCi/L in some older homes with dirt crawl spaces. The Health Department does not mandate mitigation, but if you are selling a home, most buyers will ask for the test results. And if the number is high, they will want a solution before closing.

It is also worth noting that the EPA action level is not a safety line. There is no safe level of radon. The risk is cumulative. Even a reading of 2 pCi/L carries some risk, though it is much lower than at 4 pCi/L. Some homeowners choose to mitigate at levels below 4 simply for peace of mind. That is a personal decision, but it is one that an informed homeowner can make only after testing.

What Happens After a High Test Result

If your test shows elevated radon levels, the next step is mitigation. The most common and effective system for homes with basements or slab foundations is sub-slab depressurization. A certified radon mitigator drills a small hole through the basement floor, digs out a pit beneath the slab, and runs PVC piping from that pit up through the wall to a fan unit on the outside of the house. The fan creates a vacuum under the slab, pulling radon gas away from the house and venting it safely above the roofline.

Sealant is applied to cracks and joints in the slab to reduce the amount of soil gas that can enter. The fan unit runs continuously, and a manometer on the pipe shows whether the system is working. A properly installed radon mitigation system can reduce radon levels by 90 percent or more. After the system is in place, a post-mitigation test is essential to confirm that the levels have dropped below the action level. Dan Jenkins always runs that follow-up test as part of the service.



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For homes with crawl spaces, the approach is similar but adapted. The crawl space may be encapsulated with a heavy plastic liner, and the vent pipe runs from under the liner to the exterior fan. In both cases, the system is low-maintenance. The fan unit should last five to ten years, and the manometer gives you a visual check whenever you walk past it.

Choosing a Radon Contractor

Not every contractor who offers radon services is a certified radon mitigator. Certification requires training, testing, and experience with the specific methods that work in Pennsylvania. Look for someone who is listed by the National Radon Proficiency Program or the National

Radon Safety Board. A certified radon mitigator will also carry liability insurance and offer a warranty on the system.

When you talk to a radon contractor, ask about the type of system they recommend and whether they include a post-mitigation test. Some companies quote a low price but leave out the final test, which means you have to pay extra to verify the fix. Transparent pricing, like what Dan Jenkins provides, means you know the total cost upfront, including the test and any necessary adjustments.

I have seen too many homeowners pay for a mitigation system that did not actually work because it was installed incorrectly. The PVC piping must be sloped properly so condensation drains back into the soil, the fan must be sized for the specific house, and the sealant must be applied to all visible cracks. A good installer will also check for other radon entry points like the sump pump lid or the gap around the main drain pipe.

Testing Is Not a One-Time Event

Radon levels can change over time. A new addition, a change in the heating system, or even a shift in the soil can alter how much radon enters the house. The EPA recommends retesting every two years, or after any major renovation. If you install a mitigation system, you should test again after the system has been running for at least 24 hours, and then again every few years to make sure the fan is still working.



Some homeowners set a reminder on their phone to order a radon test kit each spring. Others prefer to have a professional come out and run the test. Either way, the habit of regular testing is what keeps your family safe. Radon testing York County is not a one-and-done chore; it is part of responsible homeownership in this area.

If you are reading this and have never tested your home, I would encourage you to start with a simple short-term test. The cost is small compared to the peace of mind. And if the result is high, you have options. Mitigation is straightforward, effective, and not as expensive as most people think. The key is knowing what you are dealing with. That knowledge starts with a test.