

# Helpful Links

## **DSHS Radon Program:**

[www.dshs.state.tx.us/radiation/radon.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/radiation/radon.shtm)

## **DSHS Indoor Air Quality for Schools:**

[www.dshs.state.tx.us/iaq/schools.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/iaq/schools.shtm)

## **EPA Radon Website:**

[www.epa.gov/radon](http://www.epa.gov/radon)

## **EPA Region 6 Indoor Air:**

[www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6pd/iaq](http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6pd/iaq)

## **EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Website:**

[www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools)

Adapted from the following publication:  
EPA. (1994). Radon in Schools, 2nd ed.,  
Publication #: EPA-402-F-94-009

Testing for radon is **simple** and **free** thanks to the assistance of a grant from the EPA. DSHS is now able to offer radon test kits and laboratory analyses at no cost for schools.

For information on obtaining **free** radon test kits please contact:



Radon Program  
MC 1987  
P.O. Box 149347  
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

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Phone: 1-800-293-0753 ext. 2428  
Fax: (512) 834-6726  
Email: [Radon@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:Radon@dshs.state.tx.us)  
Website Address:  
[www.dshs.state.tx.us/radiation/radon.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/radiation/radon.shtm)

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Every School  
Should Take  
This  
Simple Test



# Radon In Schools

## What is Radon?

A naturally occurring colorless, odorless,  
tasteless gas that is radioactive.

## Radon - Is it a Problem in Your School?

Chances are you've already heard of radon—a radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. Radon seeps into buildings from the natural decay of uranium that is found in rock and nearly all soils. It can also come from well water.

But what you might not have heard is that high levels have been found in a number of schools across the country.



You can't see, taste, or smell radon. In fact, the only way to discover if a problem exists is to test for it.

Radon exposure increases risk of lung cancer. Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe.

Small bursts of energy are released from these materials. These bursts can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer over one's lifetime.

An individual's risk of lung cancer is mostly influenced by three factors:

- the level of radon
- the duration of exposure
- smoking habits

**EPA<sup>1</sup> recommends that all schools nationwide be tested for radon.**

Having your school tested for radon is something you may want to consider and discuss with your school officials. Because as real as the problem of radon is, the good news is that it can be solved.

Testing is SIMPLE and FREE

**How are schools tested for radon?  
Basic elements of testing:**

- Test all frequently used rooms in contact with the ground (usually basement and first floor) including offices, libraries, gymnasiums and laboratories. Avoid high humidity areas or places where the test kit may get wet (showers, crawlspaces).
- Closed room conditions are needed at least 12 hours prior to testing and during the 48-72 hour testing period (all windows shut).
- Place test kit 2 or more feet above the ground.

<sup>1</sup>Environmental Protection Agency

**School Testing Strategy:**

**Step 1:** Initial Testing:

- Obtain free test kits, procedures, log sheets and postage-paid return shipping labels from DSHS<sup>2</sup>.
- Perform the 48-72 hour tests using activated charcoal devices.

**Step 2:** Follow-up Testing:

- Complete a second short-term test in any rooms where the test results were 4.0 picocuries/liter (pCi/L) or more on the initial test.

**Step 3:** Take action to reduce levels if:

- The average of the initial and follow-up short-term test is 4.0 pCi/L or more.



**Every home should also take this test.** School isn't the only place where students and teachers can be exposed to radon. Visit the DSHS Radon website for information on obtaining a free test kit for your home.

<sup>2</sup>Texas Department of State Health Services