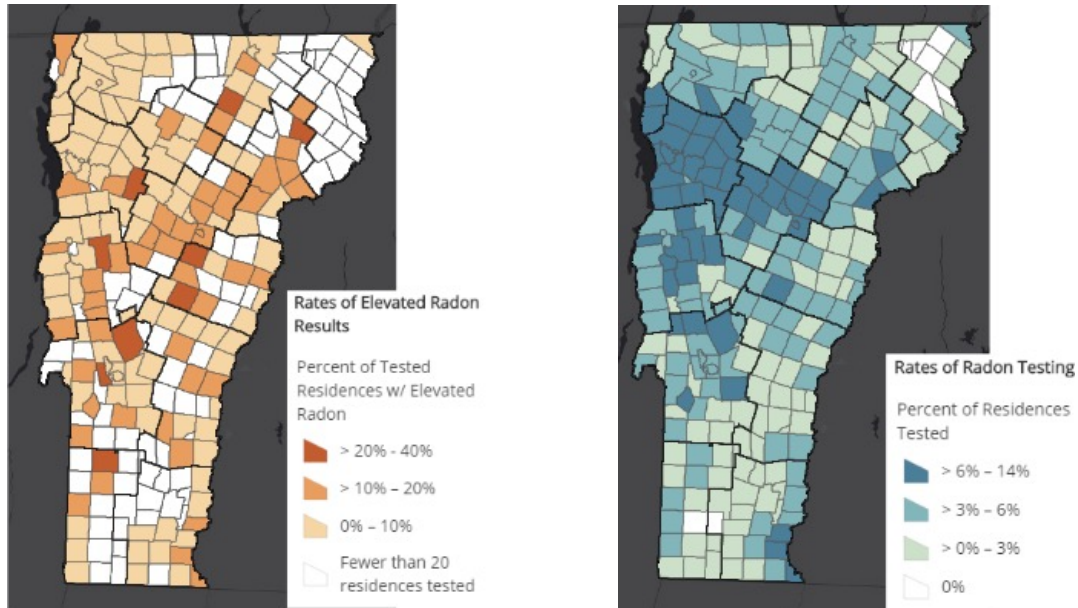


# Vermont Radon Fact Sheet



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## Vermont Radon

One in seven Vermont homes has elevated levels of radon. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that has no color, smell or taste. Radon comes from the decay of uranium, which is a radioactive element found naturally in the Earth's crust. Over billions of years, uranium decays into radium, and eventually, radon. Radon is present in outdoor air, and radon levels can build up inside people's homes.

**Unless you test for it, there is no way of knowing if radon is present in your home.**

The average level of radon in Vermont homes is 2.3 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), compared to the national average of 1.3 pCi/L.

The Vermont Radon Program offers free long-term radon in air test kits to Vermont residents. Many Vermonters have tested their homes and the program continues to provide outreach on the importance of testing homes for radon. The program provides further outreach to any home with a radon level greater or equal to 2.0 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) with the objective to increase the number of homes that install a radon mitigation system. The Vermont Radon Program offers free radon screenings and mitigation support to interested Vermont schools. To date, approximately 20% of Vermont's schools have been screened for radon. Over 13% of schools screened have had at least one room with a radon level at or above the EPA action level. It is estimated that there are approximately 70 schools in Vermont that have at least one room with a high level of radon and do not know it. The Vermont Radon Program promotes and educates builders and contractors on the use of radon-resistant new construction (RRNC) techniques and promotes the adoption of RRNC language in building codes.

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## **Pending/Enacted Legislation**

Vermont law does not require a radon test as part of a real estate transaction. For real estate transactions or other cases where a quick test is needed, the Vermont Health Department Laboratory sells short-term radon test kits. Short-term test kits can also be purchased from private labs and building supply stores. Vermont law does not require radon testing or mitigation in schools. There is pending legislation that would initiate a radon in schools testing program. This legislation would also establish a committee to identify possible funding sources for school radon mitigations.

## **Vermont Cancer Control Plan**

With an objective to prevent cancer from occurring, the plan focuses on tobacco, oral health, physical activity and nutrition, HPV and Environmental Hazards (ultraviolet radiation, radon and safe drinking water). Strategies to reduce the burden of radon induced lung cancer include support partners and promoting programs focused on reducing environmental hazards like radon in air and water. The plan includes goals to reduce exposure to environmental hazards among Vermonters. Specifically, one goal is to reduce exposure to radon by increasing the percent of households that install a radon mitigation system when they receive a high radon test result. Last year, of households that received a radon result at or above 4.0 pCi/L, 43% mitigated their home. It is estimated that 50 Vermonters die from radon-related lung cancer each year. Most of the deaths occur among smokers and former smokers.

## **Funding**

The Vermont Radon Program is funded by the EPA State Indoor Radon Grant (SIRG). This is a grant that is a maximum of 60% federally funded with a minimum of a 40% match from the state. In addition to outreach materials, testing supplies, and sub-grants, SIRG funding helps fund program staff including the Program Technician and Public Health Industrial Hygienist. The Environmental Health Program Manager provides an in-kind match of 15%.