

Pat Quinn, Governor  
Andrew Velasquez III, Director

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## **IEMA Encourages People to Test Homes for Radon during Radon Action Week Oct. 18-24**

### *Radon is second-leading cause of lung cancer*

SPRINGFIELD – Radon gas is the second-leading cause of lung cancer and the leading cause of the deadly disease for non-smokers. Yet many people in Illinois have no idea if their homes have high levels of this health hazard. That’s why the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is encouraging people throughout Illinois to test their homes for radon during Radon Action Week October 18-24.

“It’s estimated that nearly 1,200 radon-related lung cancer deaths occur each year in Illinois,” said IEMA Director Andrew Velasquez III. “Our studies have found homes with excessive radon levels in every county in Illinois. The only way to know if your home has too much radon is to test. I urge everyone to protect their loved ones’ health by testing for radon.”

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas that comes from the radioactive decay of naturally occurring uranium in the soil. It can enter homes and buildings through small cracks in the foundation, sump pumps or soil in crawlspaces. The National Academy of Sciences and the Surgeon General estimate that 21,000 radon-related lung cancer deaths occur annually in the United States, as many as 1,160 of those in Illinois.

Homeowners can either test the home themselves, using test kits available at most home improvement and department stores, or hire a radon measurement contractor. IEMA licenses more than 266 measurement and 88 mitigation contractors statewide.

IEMA collects and analyzes radon home test results throughout the state to determine the potential radon risk by county. To date, the agency’s radon staff has analyzed results from more than 100,000 home radon tests conducted by professional contractors and homeowners between 2003 and 2008. Those results showed that nearly 40 percent of Illinois homes tested have radon levels above the USEPA-recommended 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L).

For more information about radon, radon testing results from your county or to find an IEMA-licensed radon measurement or mitigation contractor in your area, visit [www.radon.illinois.gov](http://www.radon.illinois.gov).