

***New Jersey Department of Environmental
Protection***

SCHOOL RADON TESTING PROGRAM

Parent Notification

Radon testing in schools will significantly reduce many children's exposure to radon in the school environment, and lower their risk of lung cancer in future years.

Once school testing is completed, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) recommends posting of the radon test results in a public area that parents can access easily. Along with the test results, a fact sheet must be posted to enable parents to interpret the results. This fact sheet ("Interpretation of Radon Testing Results") is available on the DEP Radon web site: www.njradon.org.

School radon testing information is public information, and will be released by DEP to individuals or organizations that request it.

In addition, the DEP recommends that schools play an active role in educating parents, teachers, and students about radon before, during and after testing. Providing parents with complete information will help prevent unnecessary alarm if elevated levels are found. This educational process can occur through mailings, public meetings, e-mail messages, newsletters, and classroom discussions about radon. Samples of letters that should be sent to parents are attached, and a parent fact sheet entitled "Radon in Schools: A Fact Sheet for Parents" is available on the DEP Radon web site: www.njradon.org.

Teachers are encouraged to cover radon in their lessons before or during testing. "Radon Alert," a set of lesson plans developed by national experts for use by teachers of elementary (grade four and above), junior high, and high school classes, is available in online form at www.njradon.org.

By providing clear, complete information to parents, teachers and students about radon, as well as emphasizing the need to test at home and in schools, school officials will increase the likelihood of a cooperative response. At the same time, schools will be providing parents, teachers, and children with valuable information about radon as a lifelong environmental health concern.

Sample Letters to Parents

SAMPLE A – At initiation of testing:

Dear Parents:

This is to inform you that during _____, the _____ School will be conducting testing for radon. The purpose of the testing is to determine the radon concentrations in those rooms in the school in which radon might be of concern. These would include all frequently occupied rooms, such as classrooms and offices, which are in contact with the ground or are directly above unoccupied areas of the basement.

Enclosed with this letter is a fact sheet, “Radon in Schools: Fact Sheet for Parents” which provides answers for commonly asked questions about radon testing in schools.

Once testing is completed, the radon testing results will be posted at the _____, along with a fact sheet explaining how to interpret the results.

If you have any questions after reading the fact sheet, please contact _____ at the School, or the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Radon Section at (800) 648-0394 or visit: www.njradon.org.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE B – Following initial testing if test results are all below 4 pCi/L:

Dear Parents:

As you may be aware, the _____ School District has completed testing of all rooms in contact with the ground in the _____ School, at _____ [address] for radon.

We are pleased to report that all the tests in the _____ School were below 4 pCi/L, the level at which the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommend that action be taken. Therefore, no further action is needed at this time.

A complete list of radon testing results has been posted at the _____ along with information about how to interpret the results.

Enclosed with this letter is a fact sheet, "Radon in Schools: Fact Sheet for Parents" which provides answers for commonly asked questions about radon testing in schools. If you have any questions after reading it, please contact _____ at the School, or the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Radon Section at (800) 648-0394 or visit: www.njradon.org.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE C – Following initial testing if some test results are 4 pCi/L or higher:

Dear Parents:

As you may be aware, the _____ School District has completed testing of all rooms that have contact with the ground in the _____ School, at _____ [address], for radon.

The results of testing in the _____ School are as follows.

- _____ rooms (out of _____ rooms tested) had test results that were at or above 4 pCi/L. The test results for these rooms ranged from _____ to _____ pCi/L.
- All other rooms tested below 4 pCi/L.

A complete list of radon testing results has been posted at the _____ along with information about how to interpret the results.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency recommend that remediation be conducted when concentrations are 4 pCi/L or higher.

Remediation typically involves the installation of venting systems that vent radon gas from the ground beneath the building to the outside air, where it is quickly diluted to very low levels. In addition, adjustments may be made to the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system to increase ventilation or air pressure so that radon levels are reduced.

An effort will be made to remediate the affected area of the school within a short time period. Because a child's exposure in a particular classroom represents a small part of their exposure over the whole year, continued use of the classroom during this period is not a health problem unless radon levels are extremely high. Children spend 12 percent of their time in school over a full year, compared with more than 75 percent of their time spent in the home environment.

Enclosed with this letter is a fact sheet, "Radon in Schools: Fact Sheet for Parents" which provides answers for commonly asked questions about radon testing in schools. If you have any questions, please contact _____ at the School, or the DEP Radon Section at (800) 648-0394 or visit: www.njradon.org.

Sincerely,

8/2/06