When You Build a New Home: Put in a System to Reduce Radon Dangers

Radon Tipsheet #4

September 2011

When you build a new house, protect your family from radon—a major health danger.

Radon is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer. High levels of radon gas occur naturally in Maine soil and water, and can move into a house through the ground. The house then traps the radon in the air inside. ANY house can have a radon problem. It doesn't matter where it's located.

When you build a new home, you have the chance to protect your family from radon.

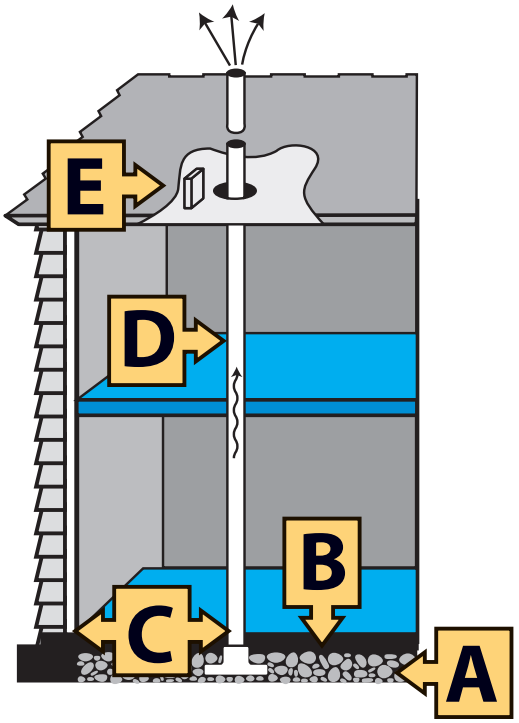
Ask your contractor to put in a radon reduction system. The system will cost a little extra - around $1000 or less. This costs less than putting in a treatment system later, and it will work better. The State of Maine has standards for building low radon homes. Check the website below or call us to find out more.

Most techniques include prepping under the foundation, pipes, and an electric 'box'.

A radon reduction system has 5 important parts shown in the illustration at right.

What the letters point to:

- **A** At least a 4-inch layer of clean gravel or other material under the flooring that allows soil gases to move under the house
- **B** Heavy plastic sheeting over the gravel and under the slab to prevent soil gases from coming into the house. In crawl spaces, this sheeting is placed directly over the earth floor.
- **C** Cracks and openings in the foundation and walls sealed and caulked to help prevent soil gases from getting in
- **D** A Vent pipe (4-inch PVC pipe commonly used for plumbing) that runs from the gravel layer, up through the house, and out the roof
- **E** Electric junction box installed so that if needed, an electric fan can be added to draw the radon up and out of the soil



When you move in, test for radon. The test results will tell you if you need to add a fan and activate your system.

If you had a well drilled, be sure to test the well water for radon too.

Use Radon Tipsheet #2 *Test Your Home for Radon* from the website below to make sure you test correctly.

Discuss your specific situation with State of Maine radon experts.

Protect your family. Learn. Test. Treat if needed.

- Check this website: **www.MaineRadiationControl.org**
- For advice: **1-800-232-0842 • radon.dhhs@maine.gov • TTY: 800-606-0215**

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
An Office of the Department of Health and Human Services
Paul R. LePage, Governor
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