

## **RADON TESTING & MITIGATION INFORMATION**

Most, if not all, of the Realtor Contract Forms now have Radon listed as one of the criteria that the buyer can request. There is much misinformation about Radon, particularly about the best testing methodology -- as well as its mitigation. A recent buyer wanted a short term radon test which turned out to be above the upper threshold limit. The seller engaged a Mitigation individual who did a very poor job and left us with a real problem. There is lucrative money in this field.

The Board felt it essential to get a handle on this radon issue and then educate our owners to the facts. Having had some management experience in this arena, I volunteered to gather information from experts in the Health Physics field. Health Physics is a discipline dealing with radiation and its safety – and radon is one of many radioactive materials. It is a tasteless, odorless gas formed by the disintegration of uranium and radium found especially (but not all) regions with granitic soils.

I got some local leads from my former colleagues at the Merck Research Labs. This led me to Ben Edwards, an RSO (Radiation Safety Officer) at Duke who provided good information. He put me in touch with Dr. James Watson, a retired Health Physics Professor at UNC. He is recognized as the very best expert in North Carolina having done much of the county by county monitoring of radon, leading to the radon map for the state. I also talked with Dr. Felix Fong from the NC Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources.

From these radon experts, here are some things you all should know:

1. There are NO EPA REGULATIONS, state or federal, for radon emission levels. The EPA has recommendations that some people are touting as regulation or a requirement.
2. You are NOT required by any law or regulation to do radon testing.
3. However, if the buyer wants one you probably will want to do one to get the sale.
4. If you do a radon test, here are some very important things you need to know:
  - a. The short term test (i.e., the two day test which most testers use, especially when a home sale is pending) is VERY UNRELIABLE. It typically costs \$100 to \$125/test. You can buy a do-it-yourself kit for ~ \$10 - \$15 (or even free).
  - b. The short term test is not the real world. All windows and doors are to be closed for 12 hours before the test and then kept closed for another 48 hours during the test.
  - c. IF the 48 hour test exceeds the upper limit of 4 MicroCuries/Liter, a second but LONG TERM test is highly recommended -- at minimum do another short term test.
  - d. Dr. Watson recommended against bringing in Mitigation based on only one short term test result. Mitigation costs in the range of \$1,200 to \$1,500.
  - e. Any mitigation installation requires approval of the Board's Bldg. Maint. Committee.
  - f. The minimum Long Term Radon Test is 91 days; anything more up to one year is better. You can purchase a long term test kit for ~ \$20 to \$30 and do your own test.
  - g. There are no guidelines or requirements as to how long the long term test results are good for. However, Dr. Watson said that any emissions should not change significantly over time (using the long term test).

- h. He suggests owners would benefit by doing their long term test NOW so you know if you have a problem, do remediation if you so choose, and have the results when a buyer wants to see them. *The Board recommends all owners do this.*
5. A good website starter is [www.ncradon.org](http://www.ncradon.org). On left side, scroll down to the last item -Radon Links; go to EPA Links and click on RADON PUBLICATIONS; then scroll down to the first publication "A Citizens Guide to Radon". Follow other links and other websites to learn more. Also, use Google by entering "Radon Test Kits" -- and similar search words.

For the Board, Ron Rosenberger 6/15/07