



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

# NEWS

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## **Governor Blagojevich reminds homebuyers, sellers that Illinois Radon Awareness Act is set to take effect Jan. 1**

### ***Homebuyers must receive information about radon-related health risks as part of real estate transaction***

**SPRINGFIELD**– Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today reminded people planning to buy or sell a home after the new year, that a new law designed to increase public awareness about the health risks associated with radon will go into effect January 1, 2008. The Governor also encouraged homeowners to test their homes for the cancer-causing radioactive gas. The Illinois Radon Awareness Act requires sellers to provide anyone buying a home, condominium or other residential property in Illinois with information about indoor radon exposure and the fact that radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause overall.

“Each year, more than 160,000 homes are sold in Illinois, so this new law will help us spread the word about radon health risks and the importance of testing homes for radon,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “This law is a great educational tool that should help us increase the number of homes that get tested for radon.”

Beginning January 1, homebuyers must be provided with two pieces of information: the “Radon Testing Guidelines for Real Estate Transactions” and a “Disclosure of Information on Radon Hazards.” The new law doesn’t require that homes be tested for radon prior to the sale or that radon remediation work be conducted if test results show high levels of radon. However, under the new law, if a radon test has been conducted on the home those results must be provided to the buyer.

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 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has determined that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the nation, but the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers. 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.

To help real estate agents and private sellers of residential property comply with the new law, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) developed the “Radon Testing Guidelines for Real Estate Transactions” brochure, which provides information for the homebuyer including test options for real estate transactions, recommendations on who should conduct a radon test related to a home sale, guidelines on proper testing and information about what to do if the test results show elevated levels of radon.

“We recommend that everyone test their home for radon, whether you’re buying a new home or have lived in the same house for several years,” said IEMA Director Andrew Velasquez III. “We’ve found homes with elevated levels of radon in every part of Illinois, and there’s no way to know whether or not your home has excess radon unless you test for it. It’s a simple step to take to ensure the health of your family.”

IEMA licenses radon measurement and mitigation professionals to ensure they have the proper equipment, specialized training and technical skills to do the job right. IEMA encourages anyone who discovers their home has elevated levels of radon to contact a licensed radon mitigation professional to correct the problem. Depending on the home, radon mitigation can cost between \$800-1,200.

The “Radon Testing Guidelines for Real Estate Transactions” brochure, a sample “Disclosure of Information on Radon Hazards,” several other radon publications, results from a statewide radon study, lists of licensed radon measurement and mitigation professionals and requests for free home test kits are all available on the IEMA website at [www.radon.illinois.gov](http://www.radon.illinois.gov). Radon information and free home test kits are also available through the radon hotline at 1-800-325-1245.