



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**January 12, 2021**

## **DEP and Second Lady Encourage Pennsylvanians to Test Their Homes for Radon During National Radon Action Month**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Executive Deputy Secretary Ramez Ziadeh and Pennsylvania Second Lady Gisele Fetterman today encouraged Pennsylvanians to test their homes for radon as part of National Radon Action Month.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible radioactive gas that enters homes from the ground and, with long term exposure, is the second leading cause of lung cancer, after smoking.

“High levels of radon have been found in every county in Pennsylvania. Since you can’t see or smell radon, doing a simple test is the only way to find out if you’re breathing in high levels and take action to keep your home a healthy place,” said Executive Deputy Secretary Ziadeh.

“As a parent, I’m concerned about everything that goes into my children’s bodies. It’s devastating to think our loved ones could possibly become gravely sick from something we didn’t even know was there,” said Second Lady Fetterman.

Mrs. Fetterman recognized three middle school students who won DEP’s 2021 Student Radon Poster Contest. DEP will include the students’ posters in its radon public education throughout the year.

Samantha Strobe, from Pleasant Hills Middle School in Allegheny County, earned first place. Her poster will be entered into a national radon poster contest. Elizabeth Bailey, from Dingman Delaware Middle School in Pike County, earned second place. Keyley Lubinsky, from Saint Clair Area School District in Schuylkill County, earned third place.

See the three winning posters on the [DEP radon website](#).

Radon gas results from the breakdown of uranium in the ground and enters homes through cracks in the foundation or other openings. Because of our geology, Pennsylvania has some of the highest radon gas levels in the country. Nearly all Pennsylvania homes have radon, and 40 percent have more radon than the federally recommended guideline of 4 picoCuries/liter (pCi/L).

“Even if your neighbors’ homes have tested low for radon, you should test your own home. Radon levels can and do vary from home to home,” said Executive Deputy Secretary Ziadeh.

[Learn more.](#)

A [map](#) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shows radon levels by county.

Radon tests are available at hardware stores for about \$20 and are simple to use, requiring only that the canister be opened and placed in the lowest livable level of the home, usually the basement. For homes on a slab or over a crawl space, the test should be placed on the first floor. The test kit remains in place for a few days, and then is mailed back to a lab. Alternatively, you can hire a certified radon tester.

Although a radon test can be done any time of year, winter is ideal because doors and windows are closed, providing more accurate results. A video on the DEP website provides [radon testing instructions](#).

If a home's radon level is higher than 4 pCi/L, DEP, EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General recommend having a radon reduction system, with a pipe and exhaust fan, professionally installed to vent the gas outside. The cost is generally in line with that of other home improvements, such as replacing a water heater.

See the DEP website for [list of DEP-certified professional radon testers, mitigators, and laboratories](#).

Having a radon reduction system installed also makes the sale of a home easier. Pennsylvania law requires anyone selling a home to disclose the results of any known radon testing. The DEP website lists [radon testing options for real estate transactions](#).

For more information, contact the DEP Radon Division:

- Radon hotline: 800-237-2366
- Phone: 717-783-3594
- Email: [ra-epbrpenvprt@pa.gov](mailto:ra-epbrpenvprt@pa.gov)

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