

Why Professional Radon Testing Services Matter for St. Louis Homes

When I bought my first house in St. Louis a few years ago, radon was not on my radar. I had heard the word before, but it seemed like one of those things that only mattered in basements up in Maine or Colorado. Then my real estate agent mentioned a radon test as part of the inspection, and I started paying attention. That short-term radon test came back at 5.2 pCi/L, well above the EPA action level of 4.0. I ended up installing a radon mitigation system before closing, and that decision changed how I think about indoor air quality.

Radon gas is a natural radioactive decay product of uranium in soil and rock. It seeps into homes through cracks in the foundation, gaps around pipes, and sump openings. The health effects of radon are serious: it is the second leading cause of lung cancer risk after smoking, responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the United States according to the EPA. The problem is that you cannot see, smell, or taste radon. The only way to know your exposure is through proper radon testing.



That is where professional [radon testing services](#) come into play. I have worked with several homeowners who tried to handle testing on their own with a home improvement store kit, and many of them ended up with confusing results or missed the testing window altogether. A professional service brings equipment, experience, and a clear protocol that follows EPA guidelines. When you hire a company like Air Sense Environmental, you get someone who understands the nuances of St. Louis geology and housing stock, which can make a big difference in accuracy.

What Professional Radon Testing Services Include

A good radon testing service starts with a conversation about the home. The tester will ask about the age of the house, foundation type, basement finish, and HVAC system. They will place a continuous radon monitor in the lowest livable level of the home, usually the basement, for a set period. Short-term radon tests last two to seven days, while long-term radon tests run for at least 90 days and give a better picture of average annual exposure. For most real estate transactions, a short-term test is standard, but for a homeowner who wants peace of mind, a long-term test is worth the wait.

One key difference between a professional service and a DIY kit is the quality control. Continuous radon monitors record readings every hour or even more frequently, measuring both radon levels and environmental conditions like temperature and humidity that could affect the reading. They also detect tampering or movement, which matters if the test is happening during an open house or while contractors are working. I have seen cases where a homeowner set a test kit on a shelf in a finished basement, but the HVAC system was running a dehumidifier that skewed the results. A professional would have caught that and recommended a different placement.

Radon Testing and the Real Estate Transaction

If you are buying or selling a home in St. Louis, real estate disclosure laws often require a radon test or at least a disclosure of known radon levels. Many buyers will include a radon contingency in their offer, and the outcome of the test can affect the sale price or even the sale itself. In my experience, a pre-listing radon test gives the seller a big advantage. You can address any issues before the buyer's inspector finds them, and you have time to shop for radon mitigation services without the pressure of a closing deadline.

Professional radon testing services are especially important in older homes, which are common in St. Louis neighborhoods like Tower Grove, Southampton, and the Central West End. These homes often have basements with stone foundations, dirt floors, or sump pumps that are prime entry points for radon gas. A trained tester knows where to place the monitor to get a representative sample, not just in the corner where the radon fan from a sump pump might pull

in extra gas. They also know to keep windows and doors closed during the test period, which is a common mistake DIYers make.

The Link Between Testing and Mitigation

Testing is only the first step. If the radon level comes back above 4.0 pCi/L, the next move is radon mitigation. The most common technique in St. Louis is sub-slab depressurization, a type of soil suction that pulls radon gas from beneath the concrete slab and vents it above the roofline. A radon system installation involves drilling a hole in the basement floor, creating a suction pit, running a pipe to the exterior, and installing a radon fan that runs continuously. After installation, the contractor should perform post-installation verification testing to confirm that the system is working and the radon level has dropped below the action level.

I have spoken with homeowners who skipped the post-installation verification because they assumed the system was working. One couple in Webster Groves had a mitigation system installed but never retested. Two years later, they put their house on the market, and the buyer's test came back at 6.8 pCi/L. The system had a loose connection in the fan housing that allowed radon to leak back into the basement. A simple post-installation verification would have caught that problem immediately. Reputable radon testing services can also include this follow-up, and it is worth the extra cost.



Choosing a Radon Testing Provider

When you look for radon testing services in St. Louis, you want someone who is certified and experienced. The National Radon Proficiency Program and the National Radon Safety Board both offer certifications for testers and mitigators. Ask about their equipment, their process for quality assurance, and whether they provide a written report with the results. A good report will include the average radon level, the test duration, and any conditions that might have affected the reading.

Another thing to consider is whether the company offers both testing and mitigation. Some companies separate the two to avoid conflicts of interest, and that is a valid approach. But if you use the same company for both, you gain the advantage of a single point of contact and a team that already knows your home. Air Sense Environmental, for example, handles radon testing, radon system installation, and post-installation verification, which can streamline the whole process. Just make sure the testing is done before any mitigation work begins, so you have a baseline reading.

Practical Tips for Homeowners

- Test your home every two years, even if you have a mitigation system. Radon levels can change as the ground shifts, water tables change, or new construction alters drainage patterns.
- Do a short-term radon test during the heating season when windows are closed and the house is closed up. That gives you the worst-case scenario, which is what the EPA recommends for action.
- If you are building a new home, ask your builder about radon-resistant construction techniques like a gas-permeable layer under the slab and a passive vent pipe. You can always add a radon fan later if testing shows a problem.
- Keep records of all radon tests and mitigation work. They can be valuable during a home sale and help you track changes over time.

Final Thoughts

Radon is not a scare tactic. It is a real environmental hazard that affects thousands of homes in St. Louis and across the Midwest. The EPA estimates that nearly one in every fifteen homes in the United States has elevated radon levels. In some parts of St. Louis County, that number is higher. The good news is that radon reduction is straightforward and affordable, usually costing between \$800 and \$1,200 for a standard sub-slab depressurization system. But none of that matters if you never test.

Professional radon testing services give you the data you need to make an informed decision. Whether you are buying a home, selling one, or just want to know what your family is breathing,

a proper test is the only way to know. I have seen too many people rely on a neighbor's test result or a vague memory of a test from ten years ago. Radon levels can change, and the only way to be sure is to test your own home with the help of someone who knows what they are doing. If you live in St. Louis, take advantage of the local expertise available through companies like Air Sense Environmental. They understand the local soil conditions, the common foundation types, and the best practices for both testing and mitigation.

Remember, radon testing services are not just about checking a box for a real estate deal. They are about protecting your health and your family's health. The lung cancer risk from radon exposure is cumulative, and the longer you put off a test, the more exposure you might be getting. A single short-term radon test can give you the peace of mind that your home is safe or the push you need to take action. Either way, it is a small investment for something that could save your life.