

Rising Radon Levels in York County Prompt Renewed Health Warnings for Homeowners

New data on radon levels in York County has prompted health and environmental officials to repeat long-standing advice that every home should be tested for the radioactive gas. The odourless, colourless substance is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, and the geology of many parts of the county makes it a higher-risk area than the national average.

Radon enters buildings through cracks in foundations, gaps around pipes, and other openings where the ground meets the structure. Because it decays into radioactive particles that can be trapped in the lungs when inhaled, prolonged exposure at elevated concentrations is a serious health concern. The latest round of measurements, collected by local environmental monitoring services and analysed against federal guidelines, shows that a significant proportion of homes in York County remain above the action level recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency.

What the Data Show

The EPA action level is 4 picocuries per litre of air. Data from the most recent testing cycles indicate that roughly one in three homes in some areas of York County exceed that threshold. While the county has long been aware of its underlying geology, the latest figures underscore that mitigation efforts have not kept pace with the number of affected properties. [Radon levels in York County](#) vary widely from one neighbourhood to the next, depending on soil composition, the type of home construction, and the effectiveness of existing sealing and ventilation measures.

Officials stress that the risk is cumulative. A home that tests at 8 pCi/L, for example, presents a lung cancer risk roughly four times that of a home at 2 pCi/L. The data also show that newer homes are not necessarily safer. Tighter construction can trap radon indoors unless a proper sub-slab depressurisation system is installed during the build.

Testing Remains the First Step

Despite decades of public awareness campaigns, testing rates remain low. A survey conducted alongside the latest radon sampling found that fewer than half of homeowners in York County had ever tested their property. Many respondents said they believed their home was safe because they lived in a newer development or because they had never noticed a problem. Radon, however, has no immediate physical symptoms. The only way to know the concentration inside a building is to measure it.

Short-term test kits are available at hardware stores, county health offices, and through online retailers for under twenty dollars. These kits are placed in the lowest livable area of the home for a period of two to seven days and then sent to a laboratory for analysis. If the result is 4 pCi/L or higher, the EPA recommends a follow-up long-term test that measures for three months to a year and gives a more accurate annual average.

Long-term testing is considered more reliable because radon levels can fluctuate with weather, season, and changes in heating and ventilation. The current data collection included both short-term and long-term measurements, and the consistency between the two types of tests gives confidence that the elevated readings are not a seasonal anomaly. The pattern of elevated radon levels in York County is persistent and widespread.

Mitigation Options

For homes that test above the action level, mitigation is technically straightforward. The most common method is sub-slab depressurisation, which involves installing a pipe through the foundation floor and a fan that pulls radon from below the house and vents it safely outside. Sealing cracks and openings in the foundation is also recommended but is rarely sufficient on its own.

Costs for a professional mitigation system typically range from several hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on the size and layout of the home. Some counties offer low-interest loans or grants for radon mitigation, and officials are urging residents to check what local assistance is available. Real estate transactions in Pennsylvania already require disclosure of known radon test results, but the new data may prompt calls for mandatory testing at the point of sale.

Key Facts for Homeowners

- Radon is measured in picocuries per litre (pCi/L). The EPA action level is 4 pCi/L.
- Any home, regardless of age or location, can have a radon problem.
- Testing is the only way to know the concentration inside a building.
- Mitigation systems are effective and can reduce levels below 2 pCi/L.
- More than half of homes in some York County neighbourhoods have never been tested.

What This Means for Public Health

The new measurements come at a time when lung cancer rates in the region are already under scrutiny. While smoking remains the primary cause, radon exposure is estimated to be responsible for roughly twenty-one thousand lung cancer deaths per year nationally. For

nonsmokers, radon is the single most important environmental cause of the disease. The elevated readings in York County mean that reducing indoor radon exposure could have a measurable impact on community health outcomes.

Health officials are careful not to cause alarm but to encourage action. The message is that radon is a manageable risk. Testing is cheap, mitigation is a one-time investment, and the health benefits are permanent. The new data simply confirms what has been known for decades: radon levels in York County are high enough that every home should be tested, and every home that tests high should be fixed.

Looking Ahead

Local environmental groups are calling for a coordinated county-wide testing campaign. The goal would be to achieve a testing rate of at least eighty percent of occupied homes within the next five years. Such a campaign would require funding, public outreach, and partnerships with real estate agents, home inspectors, and builders. Several other counties in the region have already run similar campaigns and seen testing rates rise significantly.

Without a systematic approach, the current pattern is likely to persist. Individual homeowners who test and mitigate will protect themselves, but the community-level risk will remain unchanged until testing becomes the norm rather than the exception. The latest data on radon levels in York County is a reminder that the problem has not gone away and that the tools to solve it are already in the hands of the people who live there.