

## January is Radon Action Month: Has Your School Tested for Radon?

This issue of Healthy Schools News focuses on an environmental health concern that can be lurking in schools: radon. It's National Radon Action Month, a great time for your school to take a simple test. Read on to learn more.

## Radon in Schools: What You Need to Know

Every School  
Should Take  
This  
Simple Test.



Chances are you've already heard of radon - a radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. But what you might not have heard is that high levels have been found in a number of schools across the country. It is important that students, teachers, and parents be aware that a potential problem could exist in their school.

A nationwide survey of radon levels in schools estimates that nearly one in five has at least one schoolroom with a short-term radon level above the action level of 4 pCi/L (picoCuries per liter) - the level at

which EPA recommends that schools take action to reduce the level. EPA estimates that more than 70,000 schoolrooms in use today have high short-term radon levels.

The only way to determine if a problem exists is to test for it. Having your school tested for radon is something you may want to discuss with your school officials. Because as real as the threat of radon is, the good news is that the problem can be solved.

EPA ranks indoor radon among the most serious environmental health problems facing us today. After



smoking, it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, causing an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths a year.

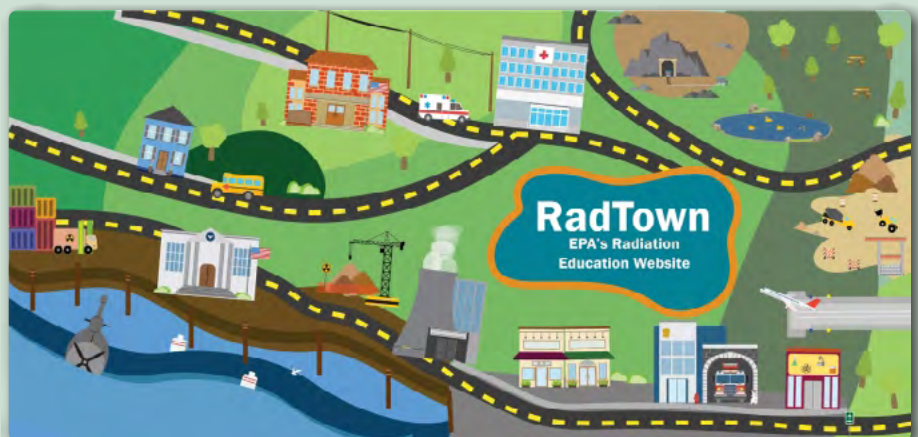
Radon is a naturally occurring gas that seeps into buildings from the surrounding soil. In some cases, well water may be a source of radon.

You can't see, taste, or smell radon. In fact, the only way to discover if high levels of radon are present is through testing.

How are schools tested for radon? Testing for radon is simple and relatively inexpensive. EPA has [published guidance that is available free to schools](#) throughout the country. Call your [State Radon Office](#) for more information.

## Teachers: Lesson Plans for Radiation Education

Cool! [RadTown](#), EPA's radiation education website, helps you teach about radiation sources encountered in everyday life. RadTown presents [lesson plans](#) for teachers covering basic concepts of radiation, radiation protection, radioactive atoms, and radioactive decay.





## Visit Us at the Green Schools Conference

EPA will be heading to the [Green Schools Conference & Expo](#), taking place March 2-4 in Portland, OR. We hope to see you there. This annual event convenes people from across the US to further the vision of sustainable, healthy schools.

## Radon Notes from Around the Region

### In Oregon, schools are required to test for radon.

Under ORS [332.341](#) and [332.345](#), school districts were required to submit a testing plan to Oregon Health Authority (OHA) by September 1, 2016. Testing must be done before January 1, 2021.

Oregon Health Authority offers a [Radon in Schools Risk Communication Kit](#). The kit can help schools communicate radon risk, provide education, and create awareness among occupants and parents while radon activities are being performed.

**Radon Forums in Oregon This Month!** [Forum](#) topics may include: where radon comes from, where it is found in Portland and the surrounding region, how it enters a home or school, health implications, how to test for radon, and how to reduce radon levels.

- January 15, 2020 – Lakeridge Highschool in Lake Oswego
- January 22, 2020 – PeaceHealth Southwest Medical in Vancouver

[Washington State](#) is using EPA funding to test and assist childcares in the state with radon testing and messaging to parents.

[Idaho](#) will be testing some childcare facilities for radon in 2020.

In Alaska, visit the [website of the U of AK Cooperative Extension Service](#) for radon information.



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