

January 2021 Is ‘Radon Action Month’ In Illinois

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SPRINGFIELD – Recognizing the importance of early detection and its impact on the health, life, and safety of all Illinois residents, Governor JB Pritzker proclaimed January 2021 as Radon Action Month in Illinois. With this proclamation, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is urging all residents to take time this month to test their home for radon.

The United States Surgeon General has warned that radon gas is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Statistics show radon has been found in nearly 40 percent of the homes tested in Illinois. In Illinois, the central and northern regions of the state are shown to have higher levels of radon in the soil.

“With more people staying home, working and learning remotely, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency is making radon awareness a priority,” said IEMA Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau. “It’s estimated that more than 1,100 people in Illinois develop radon-related lung cancer each year. It is important that people realize that radon can be found in older buildings and new constructions. A simple home test is an inexpensive and easy way to know if you and your family is at risk.”

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. This odorless, colorless, tasteless gas comes from the natural breakdown of the soil, and it enters buildings through small cracks in the foundation, sump pits, crawl spaces, floor drains and more. When radon gas mixes with outside air it can become concentrated inside buildings. If not properly mitigated, radon gas can reach drastically high levels and cause major health concerns.

Raising Awareness

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is teaming up with the American Lung Association in Illinois (ALAIL) to increase public awareness of radon risks and ways to reduce radon exposure. IEMA and ALAIL announced the continuation of two statewide contest that encourages students to use their creative talents to promote radon awareness. The Radon Video Contest asks Illinois high school students to create a 30 second commercial style video, while the Radon Poster Contest asks middle school students to create a poster that will encourage people to test their homes for radon.

	Radon Poster Contest	Radon Video Contest
Eligibility	Students Age 9-14	All High School Students
Registration Status	Now Open	Now Open
Submissions Due	March 5	March 21
First Prize	\$200	\$1000 (student), \$300 (school)

Second Prize	\$150	\$750 (student), \$200 (school)
Third Prize	\$100	\$500 (student), \$100 (school)
Honorable Mention	n/a	\$250 (student)

All contest prizes are funded by a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Both contests are sponsored by IEMA, ALAIL and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5.

In 2020, Illinois took home top honors in the National Radon Video Contest. The video, *What's Your Radon*, was produced by Girl Scout Troop 41592 and comprised of students from Barrington High School. The top posters and videos from the 2020 state contests can be viewed on IEMA's radon website at www.radon.illinois.gov. The website also includes information about radon and lists of licensed measurement and mitigation professionals. Information is also available through IEMA's Radon Hotline at 800-325-1245.