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Dave Windsor's 'Alaska Real Estate'

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Radon An Under-Recognized Alaska Health Risk

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Most of the information in this article is easily corroborated online but the writer wishes to highlight that Anchorage Bowl and Valley homes are now recommended for Radon testing. Alaska is rated the most Radon active State in the United States. The EPA suggests that levels above 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L) are a health risk factor, particularly for lung cancer.

Radon comes from the ground so properties with a crawlspace or basement are the most likely candidates. Above ground structures on a slab are less vulnerable though not guaranteed. Radon is a natural gas and comes from the radioactive decay of uranium.

Home inspectors will conduct a Radon test for less than \$200, or you can obtain a home test kit for around \$20 but you will need to wait longer for the results as you must mail it out. The home test kits are also not as accurate.

Radon is colorless and odorless, similar to carbon

monoxide but, as yet, radon alarms are not mandated in homes as are CO detectors. You can purchase a radon alarm for \$89.99 on Amazon.

As with all hazards, the consumer should try not to overreact. There is enough fear on the planet at this time and that is why I am currently working on a book on that subject. However, I advise homebuyers to ask their ASHI qualified home inspector about Radon in Anchorage (or other Alaskan location) as you will be quite surprised how often it can show up whether you live in a uranium mining town or not.

Existing Homeowners, particularly if you live on Hillside, should also consider checking out Radon as you do not have to be a homebuyer to call the home inspector. Discovery Home Inspection, Quality Home Inspection, HomeTeam are 3 of several inspection companies happy to assist. Areas where ground is rocky tend to have pockets of radon and it has shown up in individual homes in the W. Dimond area and even Airport Heights.

Eagle River and Chugiak are more likely a Radon risk than Anchorage, as is Palmer/Wasilla, but it is always a case by case issue. Mitigation of a Radon problem is expensive, from \$3,000 to \$5,000, or more if you want to fly in an out – of – State specialist.

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