



Professional Property Inspections

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT RADON?

Radon is a colorless, tasteless, and odorless gas produced by decaying uranium in the bedrock that can filter into the soil around the foundation and below the structure. Radon finds its way into basement and houses through cracks and other openings in the foundation. **It can come in from below the foundation whether it sits on a slab or has a basement.** It's radioactive and at elevated levels it can cause lung cancer, especially for a cigarette smoker. Fortunately, we don't have a high incidence of radon on Long Island, Brooklyn or Queens. In fact, according to a map published by the EPA, (click here) [EPA Radon Map](#) expected testing results in these areas are below the limits set by the EPA for mitigation.

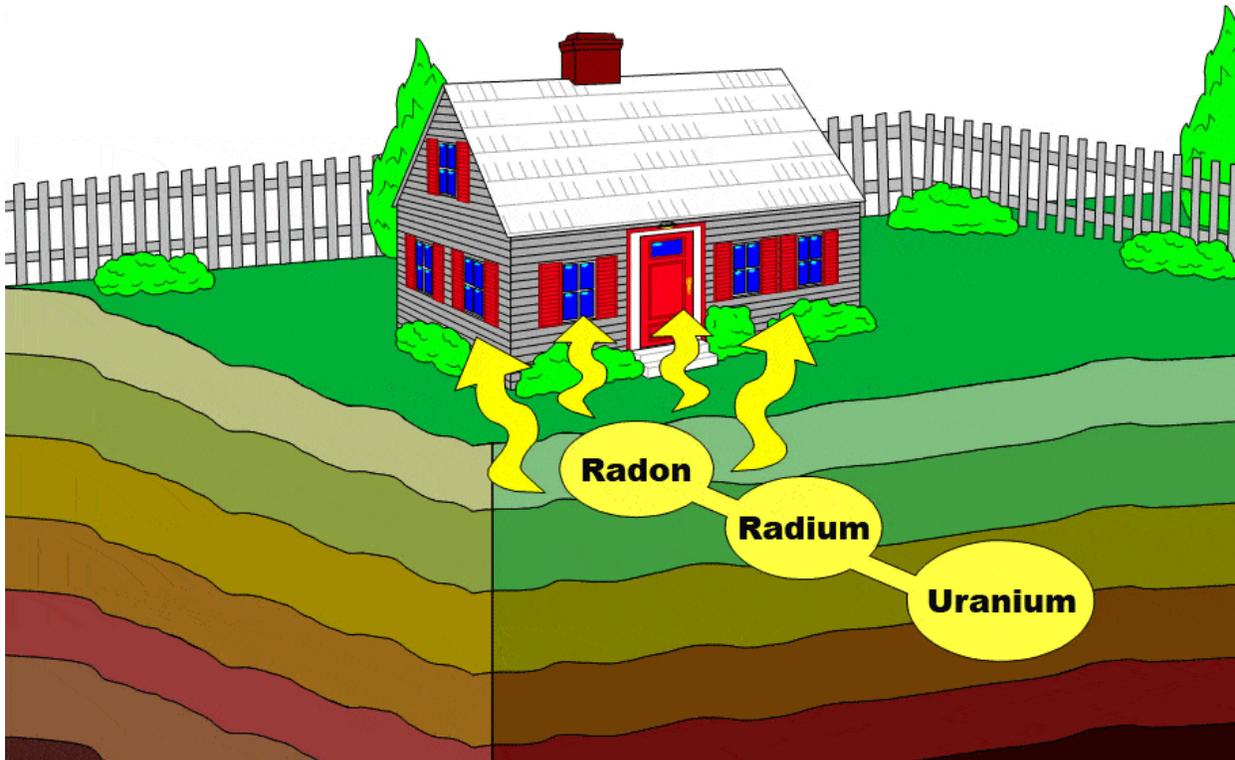
So, the chances of radon being an issue in these locations is minimal. That's why very few radon tests occur along with real estate transactions on Long Island, Brooklyn or Queens. However, it is important to understand that Long Island is a "Low Incidence" area which means that a very small number of houses have elevated levels of radon. So assuming that there is no radon is a chance that many people are willing to take. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee. So, even though the chances of finding elevated radon in this region is low, that doesn't mean that radon isn't there, and at elevated levels it's dangerous. Testing can't hurt.

In many parts of the country, testing is standard along with home inspections. In fact, Connecticut, New Jersey and most of New York State has a much higher incidence of radon so testing is a standard part of real estate transactions.

Here's how the testing works: **at the end of the inspection, the home inspector leaves at least two canisters in the basement or if there is no basement the lowest living level in the house.** The radon test canisters typically stay in place for three days. The canisters then get closed and sent to a lab where they get tested. The level of radon is expressed in picocuries per liter. The EPA recommends mitigation if the lab results produce a reading over 4 picocuries per liter.

So, what happens if the test results are above 4 picocuries per liter? Typically, a ventilation system is put in place. The systems work because radon is a gas and can be easily controlled with air movement systems. These systems may incorporate mechanical fans or passive venting. The average cost for mitigation across the country is about \$1,200. Of course, there are many variables and, in this region, expect to pay more.

So, what is the takeaway? The vast majority of transactions in our region do not incorporate a radon test. However, a radon test can't hurt, and may be considered a prudent thing to do.



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