

Why Choosing the Right Radon Testing Company Matters for Your St. Louis Home

When you are buying or selling a home in St. Louis, a lot of things can slip through the cracks. You remember the home inspection, you remember the appraisal, but the radon test sometimes feels like an afterthought. I have seen it happen more times than I can count. A home buyer falls in love with a place, the offer is accepted, and then someone remembers they need a radon test. At that point, the clock is ticking and the choice of who does the testing becomes critical. That is why picking a reliable radon testing company is not just a box to check. It is a decision that can affect the entire real estate transaction.

What Makes a Radon Test Reliable

Radon gas is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from the decay of uranium in soil. It can enter your home through cracks in the foundation, gaps around pipes, or even through the water supply. The EPA recommends that all homes be tested for radon, and if levels are at or above 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L), action should be taken to reduce them. But here is the thing: not all radon tests are created equal.

There are two basic types of tests: passive and active. A passive radon detector is usually a charcoal canister or an alpha-track detector that you leave in your home for a set period, then mail to a lab. They are inexpensive and widely available, but they have limitations. For one, they give you a single average reading over the test period. If the weather changes or someone opens a window, that average can shift. An active radon monitor, on the other hand, continuously measures radon levels and records them over time. This is a big deal because radon levels can fluctuate hour to hour, day to day.

When you work with a professional [radon testing company](#) that uses continuous radon monitors, you get real-time data. You can see if levels spiked during a storm or if they stayed steady. This level of detail matters, especially in a real estate transaction where every day counts. A home buyer does not want to wait two weeks for lab results. A home seller does not want a delayed closing because the test kit got lost in the mail. That is why more and more St. Louis real estate professionals are turning to services that use active monitors and provide same-day or next-day results.

The St. Louis Radon Reality

St. Louis sits in a region where radon potential is moderate to high. The area has a lot of limestone and clay soils, which can trap radon gas and allow it to build up in basements and crawl spaces. If you are involved in a real estate transaction here, you need to take radon

seriously. I have walked into basements that registered over 20 pCi/L. That is five times the EPA action level. The homeowners had no idea, because they had never tested.

One of the things I tell people is that a radon test is not just about passing or failing. It is about understanding your indoor air quality. Even if the level is below 4 pCi/L, some homeowners choose to install a radon reduction system for peace of mind. And that is a personal choice. But you cannot make that choice without good data. A radon test kit from the hardware store can give you a rough idea, but it is not the same as a professional assessment from a qualified radon testing company like Air Sense Environmental. They bring expertise, calibrated equipment, and a deep understanding of local geology.

How Radon Testing Fits Into a Home Inspection

A standard home inspection covers the structure, the roof, the HVAC system, the plumbing, and the electrical. But it does not always include radon testing. Some inspectors offer it as an add-on, but they often use passive detectors that take days or weeks to return results. If you are in a competitive market, that delay can cost you the deal. That is why many home buyers now request a separate radon test from a specialized company that can deliver results quickly.

I have seen situations where the home inspection goes perfectly, but the radon test comes back high. Suddenly, the buyer is asking for a radon mitigation system or a credit. The seller is scrambling to get quotes for sub-slab depressurization or other radon-resistant construction methods. A good radon testing company will not only give you accurate numbers, but they can also explain what those numbers mean and what your options are. They are not there to sell you a mitigation system, but they can point you to qualified contractors who do radon reduction.

Short-Term vs Long-Term Testing

Most real estate transactions rely on a short-term radon test, usually two to seven days. That is the standard because you need a result quickly. But if you are a home buyer moving into a new place, you might also consider a long-term radon test after you settle in. A long-term test, typically three months to a year, gives you a more accurate picture of your year-round exposure. The EPA actually recommends a long-term test as the best way to know your true risk.

However, in the context of a real estate transaction, a short-term radon test is usually the only practical option. The trick is to make sure the test is done correctly. That means closing windows and doors, maintaining normal HVAC operation, and placing the monitor in the lowest livable area of the home. A professional radon testing company knows these protocols and

follows them. A homeowner doing a DIY test might forget to keep windows closed during a storm, and the result will be artificially low.

What Happens When Radon Levels Are High

If your test comes back above 4 pCi/L, the next step is radon mitigation. The most common system is sub-slab depressurization, which involves drilling a hole in the basement floor, pulling radon gas from beneath the slab, and venting it above the roof. It sounds more complicated than it is. Most systems are installed in a day and cost between \$800 and \$1500, depending on the house. A radon reduction system can bring levels down dramatically, often to below 1 pCi/L.

Some new homes in St. Louis are built with radon-resistant construction features, like a layer of gravel under the slab, a vapor barrier, and a passive vent pipe. But even those homes should be tested after construction. Radon can find its way in through any crack or gap. An active radon monitor can show you if the passive system is working or if you need to add a fan to make it active.

Why Experience Matters in Radon Testing

There are plenty of companies that offer radon testing, but not all of them have the same level of experience. A company that has been doing this for years, like Air Sense Environmental, understands the nuances of St. Louis homes. They know that a house on a slab foundation tests differently than one with a crawl space. They know that weather patterns can affect readings. They know how to place the monitor so it gives a representative sample.

I once consulted on a case where a home buyer used a cheap radon test kit from a big box store. The result came back at 3.9 pCi/L, just under the EPA action level. The buyer felt relieved and moved forward with the purchase. Six months later, they started having respiratory issues and decided to test again with a professional continuous radon monitor. That test showed an average of 7.2 pCi/L. The first test had been placed too close to a drafty window, and the result was not accurate. The buyer ended up spending thousands on a radon reduction system after the fact. That is the kind of headache you avoid by using a qualified radon testing company from the start.

The Bottom Line for Home Buyers and Sellers

If you are a home buyer, make radon testing a contingency in your offer. Do not let the seller use a cheap DIY kit. Insist on a professional test with a continuous radon monitor. If you are a home seller, consider testing before you list. If the test comes back low, you can market that as a selling point. If it comes back high, you have time to install a radon reduction system before

the house goes on the market. Either way, you avoid surprises during the real estate transaction.

St. Louis real estate is competitive. You do not want to lose a deal over a radon test that was done wrong. A good radon testing company gives you fast, accurate results and the peace of mind that comes with knowing your indoor air quality is safe. Whether you are buying your first home or selling your fifth, radon testing should be part of the process. And it should be done right.

Working with a radon testing company that uses active monitors and understands the local area can make all the difference. It is not just about checking a box. It is about protecting your health and your investment.