

# Radon O'Fallon MO: What Homeowners Should Know About Testing and Mitigation

If you own a home in O'Fallon or anywhere in St. Charles County, radon gas is a real concern. It's not something you can see or smell, and it doesn't cause immediate symptoms, but over years of exposure it becomes the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, according to the EPA. The tricky part is that radon levels vary from house to house, even between neighbors on the same street. So the only way to know if your home has a problem is to test for it. That's where understanding radon o'fallon mo specific conditions becomes important for local homeowners.

## Why Radon Is a Concern in St. Charles County

The geology of St. Charles County, including O'Fallon, St. Peters, and Wentzville, includes soils and bedrock that can produce radon gas as uranium in the ground decays naturally. The EPA has placed much of this region in Zone 1, meaning predicted average indoor radon levels are at or above the action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). However, that's a prediction, not a guarantee. I've seen homes in the same subdivision test at 2 pCi/L while their neighbor reads 8 pCi/L. Local radon maps from MoDNR give a broad picture, but they can't replace actual testing in your home.

## How Radon Gets Into Your Home

Radon gas moves up through the soil and enters buildings through cracks in the foundation, gaps around pipes, sump pumps, and other openings. Once inside, it can build up to high levels, especially in lower levels like basements and crawl spaces that have limited airflow. This is why homes with basements in O'Fallon and St. Peters often need attention. The gas doesn't discriminate by age of the home either. I've tested brand new construction with levels over 6 pCi/L and older homes with levels well below 2 pCi/L.

## Testing Options: Short-Term vs. Long-Term

When you search for [radon o'fallon mo](#), you'll find advice to test your home, and it's good advice. The most common approach is a short-term test using a charcoal-based radon detector that sits in your home for 2 to 7 days. These are inexpensive and available at hardware stores or online. They give you a quick snapshot, but radon levels fluctuate with weather, season, and ventilation habits. A short-term test might catch a spike but miss the average.

Long-term testing, on the other hand, uses an alpha track detector that measures levels for 90 days to a year. This gives a much better picture of your actual annual exposure. The EPA recommends long-term testing for the most reliable results. If you're in a hurry during a real estate transaction, a short-term test is acceptable, but make sure to follow the instructions exactly: keep windows closed, avoid fans near the detector, and place it in the lowest lived-in level of the home.

## **Professional Radon Testing**

For a more precise assessment, consider hiring a certified radon testing professional like Air Sense Environmental. They use continuous radon monitors that record levels hour by hour. These devices can detect tampering and give a running average, which is especially useful during a home inspection period when you need a reliable result in a short window. A professional can also identify entry points and advise on the best testing location, which is often overlooked by DIY testers.

## **Mitigation: What Works and What Doesn't**

If your home tests above the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L, the next step is radon mitigation. The most common and effective method is sub-slab depressurization, also called soil suction. This involves drilling a small hole through the basement floor, creating a suction point under the slab, and venting the radon gas to the outside using a fan. The fan runs continuously and pulls the gas from beneath the house before it can enter. This system is considered active mitigation because it uses a mechanical fan.

Passive mitigation, on the other hand, relies on natural pressure differences and stack effect to vent radon. It's often installed in new construction but is less reliable than active systems because it doesn't use a fan. Many homes with passive systems still end up needing a retrofit with an active fan to bring levels down. So if you're building a new home in Wentzville or St. Peters, it's worth asking for an active system from the start.

## **Other Mitigation Techniques**

Sub-slab depressurization isn't the only tool. Crack sealing is an important part of any mitigation plan. Sealing visible cracks and gaps in the foundation reduces the pathways for radon, but it's rarely enough on its own. Radon can still seep through tiny pores in the concrete. A combination of sealing and soil suction works best.

Another option is increasing ventilation in the basement or crawl space. A ventilation system that brings in outdoor air can dilute radon levels, but it also increases energy costs and may not be practical in all climates. It's more of a temporary fix than a long-term solution.

For homes with crawl spaces, a sub-membrane suction system can be used. A plastic sheet is laid over the crawl space floor, and a fan pulls radon from under the sheet. This works well when the crawl space is accessible and the soil is exposed.

Whichever method is chosen, the goal is to bring radon levels as low as possible, preferably below 2 pCi/L. The EPA's action level is 4, but lower is always better. After mitigation, a follow-up test is essential to confirm the system is working.

## **Choosing a Mitigation Professional**

Not all radon mitigation companies are the same. Look for someone certified by the National Radon Proficiency Program (NRPP) or the National Radon Safety Board (NRSB). These certifications require training and continuing education. A qualified professional will perform a diagnostic test, such as a pressure test of the slab, to design the right system for your home. They should also explain the installation process, maintenance, and how to monitor the system over time.

In St. Charles County, companies like Air Sense Environmental have experience with local soil conditions and construction types. They can walk you through the steps and give you a clear estimate. Avoid anyone who gives a blanket quote without coming to your home or seeing your test results.

## **Radon and Real Estate Transactions**

If you're buying or selling a home in O'Fallon, St. Charles, or Wentzville, radon testing is often a contingency in the contract. Buyers want to know the radon level before closing, and sellers want to avoid surprises. A proper radon test during the home inspection period can save both parties headaches. If high levels are found, the buyer and seller negotiate on who pays for mitigation. Having a pre-listing test done can help sellers address issues upfront and avoid delays.

I've seen deals fall apart because a short-term test was placed in a closet or near an open window, giving a false low reading, only to have a later test show high levels. Don't cut corners. Use a certified professional or follow the testing instructions religiously. And if you're in a hurry, a continuous radon monitor from a professional is the fastest reliable option.

## **Ongoing Maintenance and Monitoring**

Once you have an active mitigation system installed, it needs occasional attention. The fan should run continuously, and you should check the manometer (a U-tube gauge) monthly to make sure the system is pulling suction. If the gauge reads zero, the fan may have failed or the

system is blocked. Also, seal any new cracks that appear in the foundation over time. Retest your home every two years or after major renovations to ensure levels remain low.

Some homeowners choose to install a continuous radon monitor that gives real-time readings. These are more expensive but provide peace of mind, especially if you have a finished basement or spend a lot of time on the lower level. They can also alert you if levels spike unexpectedly, for example after an earthquake or heavy rain that changes soil pressure around your foundation.

## **Final Thoughts on Radon O'Fallon MO**

Understanding radon o'fallon mo conditions is the first step toward protecting your family. The geology of St. Charles County means many homes have elevated levels, but testing is the only way to know for sure. Whether you choose a DIY test or hire a professional, the important thing is to take action. Radon is a solvable problem. With proper testing and mitigation, you can reduce your risk and enjoy a healthier home.

If you have questions about radon testing or mitigation in O'Fallon, St. Peters, Wentzville, or anywhere in St. Charles County, reach out to a local expert like Air Sense Environmental. They know the area and can help you make informed decisions based on your specific home and budget.