

What to Expect from a Radon Test in St. Louis: Costs, Methods, and Next Steps

Understanding Radon in St. Louis Homes

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas that comes from the natural decay of uranium in soil and rock. In St. Louis, the geology of the region means many homes sit on ground that can produce elevated radon levels. Over the years, I have worked with homeowners across the metro area who assumed their house was safe because the neighborhood was newer or because they had a finished basement. Neither assumption holds up. Radon can seep through any opening in contact with the soil, and the only way to know your exposure is through proper measurement.

If you are buying, selling, or simply trying to protect your family, arranging a radon test in St. Louis is the first practical step. The process is straightforward, but the variety of test options and the cost range can confuse people. Let me walk through what you actually get for your money, how the different methods compare, and what the results mean for your home. [radon test st louis](#)

Short-Term vs. Long-Term Radon Tests

The most common distinction in radon testing is between short-term and long-term devices. A short-term radon test stays in your home for two to seven days. These are often the go-to choice during a real estate transaction because they deliver results quickly. The device is usually a charcoal canister or an electret ion chamber that you place in the lowest lived-in level of the house. After the test period, you mail it to a lab, and the report comes back in a few days. You can buy these at hardware stores or online for roughly \$15 to \$30, but the reliability depends on following the instructions to the letter: closing windows, maintaining closed-house conditions, and keeping the test away from drafts and heat sources.

A long-term radon test runs for 90 days to a full year. These give a much better picture of your average radon level because radon concentrations fluctuate with weather, barometric pressure, and seasonal changes. An alpha-track detector or a continuous radon monitor placed for three months or more smooths out those spikes and dips. The cost is higher, often \$30 to \$60 for the device and lab analysis, but the accuracy for decision-making is far superior. If you are trying to decide whether to install a radon mitigation system, a long-term test is the more reliable guide.

What a Professional Radon Test in St. Louis Looks Like

For many homeowners, paying a professional to perform the radon test in St. Louis provides peace of mind that the setup and conditions are right. A company like Air Sense Environmental will send a certified technician who places one or more radon detectors in the home, checks that the test conditions are met, and sometimes uses a continuous radon monitor that logs hourly readings. A continuous radon monitor can detect tampering or unusual patterns and gives you data you can see in real time. The cost for a professional radon test in St. Louis typically ranges from \$150 to \$250, depending on the number of detectors and whether it is a short-term or long-term setup.

I have seen homes where a DIY short-term test showed 2.5 pCi/L, which is below the EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/L, but a follow-up professional long-term test averaged 5.8 pCi/L. The difference came down to seasonal ventilation and one unusually cold week during the short test. If you are serious about knowing your exposure, the professional route with a long-term device is worth the extra money.

Interpreting the Results and the EPA Action Level

The EPA action level is 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). If your radon level is above that, the agency recommends fixing your home. However, the EPA also says there is no safe level of radon, and levels between 2.0 and 4.0 pCi/L still carry risk. Many St. Louis homeowners I have talked to are surprised to learn that the action level is a guideline, not a regulation. There is no law requiring you to mitigate, except during a real estate transaction where the buyer may request it as a condition of sale.

In Missouri, the Missouri Department of Health provides resources and maintains a list of certified radon measurement and mitigation professionals. If your test comes back high, you are not alone, a significant percentage of homes in St. Louis County and the surrounding areas test above 4.0 pCi/L. The next step is mitigation, which typically involves a radon mitigation system.

How Radon Mitigation Works

Installing a radon mitigation system is the standard fix for elevated radon levels. The most common method in St. Louis is sub-slab depressurization. A contractor drills a hole through the basement slab, digs a small cavity underneath, and installs a sump pump-like collection point. From there, a radon vent pipe runs up through the house to the roofline, and a radon fan is attached to the pipe to create suction. The fan pulls the radon-laden soil gas from beneath the slab and vents it safely outdoors, well above windows and doors. All cracks and openings in the basement slab and foundation walls are sealed with sealant to improve the system's efficiency.

A properly designed sub-slab depressurization system can reduce radon levels by 80 to 99 percent. The cost for a typical St. Louis home ranges from \$1,200 to \$2,800, depending on the complexity of the routing, the number of slabs, and whether the system needs to be hidden or run externally. Some homes with crawl spaces or block-wall foundations require different approaches, but the principle is the same: reduce the pressure difference that draws radon inside.

Radon Testing During a Home Inspection

If you are in the middle of buying or selling a home, the radon test often happens alongside the home inspection. The seller typically pays for the test, but the buyer selects the company. A standard short-term radon test placed by the inspector costs around \$125 to \$200. Because the timeline is tight, the test runs for the minimum 48 hours, and the results come back after the inspection contingency period ends. This timing can create tension if the levels are high and the buyer wants the seller to pay for mitigation. Knowing your state's real estate disclosure rules helps. Missouri does not require sellers to test for radon, but if they have tested and know the level, they must disclose it. Many sellers choose to test proactively so they can address issues before listing.

Choosing the Right Radon Detector

The market offers several types of radon detectors, and the choice affects both cost and confidence in the result. Charcoal canisters are inexpensive and fine for a quick screening, but they are sensitive to humidity and placement errors. Alpha-track detectors are more robust for long-term testing. Continuous radon monitors are the gold standard for professional use, they log hourly data, detect interference, and give you a detailed picture of how radon levels change throughout the day. If you are managing a mitigation system, a continuous monitor can also verify that the system is working as intended.

Final Thoughts on Radon Testing in St. Louis

Radon testing is not a one-time event. Levels can change after renovations, foundation settling, or even after you install a new HVAC system. The prudent approach is to test your home every two years, or any time you finish a basement or change the way you use the lowest level. A radon test in St. Louis is a relatively small investment that tells you whether you need to take action. If the number is low, you sleep easier. If it is high, you know exactly what to fix and can budget for a mitigation system that protects your family for decades. The key is to start with a reliable measurement, and that means choosing the right test method for your situation and following the protocol closely.