

Why Homeowners in Metro East Illinois Should Care About Radon Belleville IL

If you live in the Metro East Illinois area, you have probably heard someone mention radon. But unless you have actually tested for it, the topic can feel abstract. That changed for me a few years ago when a friend in Belleville discovered that his finished basement had radon levels nearly four times the EPA action limit. He had no symptoms, no smell, no warning. That is the thing about radon gas. It does not announce itself.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from the decay of uranium in soil. It moves up through the ground and into homes through cracks in foundations, gaps around pipes, and other openings. Once inside, it can accumulate to unhealthy levels. The EPA estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States each year. The American Lung Association lists it as a leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. For homeowners in Metro East Illinois, the geology of the region means radon risk is something to take seriously.

Why Radon Belleville IL Matters for Local Homeowners

Belleville sits on soil that can produce radon. The EPA has mapped radon potential across the country, and parts of St. Clair County fall into Zone 1, meaning predicted average indoor radon levels above 4 picocuries per liter. That is the threshold where the EPA recommends action. But even homes in lower-risk zones can have high levels. The only way to know is to test.

When I talk to neighbors in Belleville, Edwardsville, O'Fallon IL, and Collinsville, many assume that a new home is safe, or that a home without a basement is fine. Neither assumption is correct. Radon can enter through a slab foundation just as easily as through a crawl space. I have seen readings of 8 pCi/L in a slab-on-grade home in O'Fallon IL. The family had lived there for seven years without testing. They were breathing in radon every night while they slept.

That is why [radon Belleville IL](#) is not just a phrase. It is a real concern that connects the local geology to your family's health. Air Sense Environmental has been working with homeowners throughout the region to address this issue. They focus on radon testing and mitigation for Metro East Illinois homes, and their approach reflects the practical judgment that comes from years of field experience.

Testing Is the First Step

Radon testing is straightforward. You can buy a short-term radon detector at a hardware store or hire a professional to do a more thorough assessment. Short-term tests usually last two to

seven days. Long-term tests run for 90 days or more and give a better picture of average radon levels because radon can fluctuate with weather and season.

I recommend starting with a short-term test if you have never tested. Place the detector in the lowest lived-in level of the home, away from drafts and direct sunlight. Follow the instructions closely. Open windows and run fans as directed, or not, depending on the test type. If the result comes back at 4 pCi/L or higher, the EPA says to take action. Many professionals, including those at Air Sense Environmental, suggest considering mitigation at levels above 2 pCi/L if children or elderly people live in the home.

Testing is cheap. The cost of ignoring it can be enormous.

When Mitigation Is Needed

If your test shows elevated radon levels, do not panic. Radon mitigation is a proven technology. The most common method is sub-slab depressurization. That involves drilling a small hole through the basement floor or slab, creating a suction point under the house, and using a fan system to draw radon gas out from beneath the foundation and vent it safely above the roofline. The fan runs continuously, and the system usually operates quietly out of sight.

I have seen sub-slab depressurization bring a home from 12 pCi/L down to 1.5 pCi/L. That is a dramatic reduction, and it happens within hours of the system being turned on. The cost depends on the home's layout, but it is far less than the medical and emotional cost of a lung cancer diagnosis.

In some cases, sealing cracks with radon sealant and improving ventilation can help, but these are rarely complete solutions on their own. A passive system without a fan may work in some homes, but an active fan system is more reliable, especially in the clay-heavy soils common around Belleville and Edwardsville. The key is to work with someone who understands local conditions. A contractor from another region might not know that the soil here can shift and open new pathways for radon.

New Construction and Radon-Resistant Construction

If you are building a new home in Metro East Illinois, radon-resistant construction is worth the investment. It is much cheaper to install a passive radon system during construction than to retrofit later. The basic elements include a layer of gravel under the slab, a vapor barrier, a sealed sump or T-junction, and a vent pipe that runs up through the roof. After the home is built, you test. If the radon level is still high, you can add a fan to the passive pipe. The savings on energy and materials are substantial.

Many builders in the area now include these features as standard, but it never hurts to ask. The National Radon Program offers guidelines, and local experts like Air Sense Environmental can review plans before the foundation is poured. That is the time to catch problems, not after the drywall is up.

Practical Advice for Homeowners

- Test your home every two years, or after any major renovation that affects the foundation or the lowest level of the house.
- If you buy a home, include a radon test in your inspection contingency. It is a small price for peace of mind.
- Keep records of your test results. If you ever sell, buyers may ask for them. Some real estate transactions in high-radon areas now require disclosure.
- Do not rely on a neighbor's test. Radon levels can vary dramatically from house to house, even on the same street.

The Bigger Picture: Illness Prevention

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, according to the American Lung Association. It is also one of the most preventable. Unlike other environmental hazards, radon has a clear fix. Test, mitigate, re-test. That cycle is the core of the National Radon Program's message. For homeowners in Belleville, Edwardsville, O'Fallon IL, and Collinsville, the path is the same. The difference is that the local soil and housing stock create conditions where radon can be a more immediate issue.

I have seen families in Metro East Illinois go from worried to relieved once they understand radon. The fear comes from not knowing. The relief comes from having a plan. If you are in Belleville and you have not tested, consider starting this week. The phrase radon Belleville IL should remind you that this is not a distant problem. It is here, it is measurable, and it is manageable.

Air Sense Environmental has handled hundreds of mitigations in the region. Their crews understand how to work with basements, crawl spaces, and slab foundations common to the area. They also know the local building codes and can integrate a fan system without making the home look like a science experiment. That matters if you plan to sell someday or if you just want your utility room to stay clean.

Radon testing and mitigation are not expensive when compared to the alternatives. A single hospital stay for a lung condition can cost thousands. Radon mitigation usually costs between \$800 and \$2,500, depending on the complexity. That is a one-time expense for a system that

lasts for decades with minimal maintenance. The fan may need replacement after five to ten years, but that is a small cost compared to the protection it provides.

What to Look for in a Radon Mitigation Professional

- Certification through the National Radon Proficiency Program or the National Radon Safety Board. These are the two main credentials in the field.
- Experience with homes built on slab foundations, which are common in parts of O'Fallon IL and Collinsville.
- A written guarantee that the system will reduce radon levels to below 4 pCi/L, and ideally below 2 pCi/L.
- References from other homeowners in Metro East Illinois. Local knowledge matters for soil conditions and code compliance.

When you call a mitigation company, ask about their approach to post-mitigation testing. A good company will re-test the home after the system is installed to confirm it works. They should also explain how to maintain the system and what signs to watch for if something goes wrong, like a fan that stops running or a vent pipe that gets blocked.

Radon is not something to ignore. It is also not something to fear. It is a problem with a solution. For homeowners in Belleville and the surrounding Metro East Illinois area, the first step is simple. Order a radon detector, follow the instructions, and see what you find. If the level is high, call a professional. If it is low, test again in a few years. That is the cycle that keeps families safe.

I have seen too many people assume that because they cannot see or smell radon, it is not there. That assumption is the real risk. Take it from someone who has watched a friend's radon level drop from dangerous to safe in a single afternoon. The peace of mind is worth the effort.