

Why Choosing the Right Radon Testing Company Matters for Your Home

When I bought my first house in St. Louis, I thought I had covered all the bases. I hired a home inspector, checked the roof, and had the HVAC system serviced. But one thing I overlooked was radon testing. It wasn't until a friend mentioned that her family had installed a mitigation system after finding elevated radon levels in their basement that I realized I had skipped a critical step. That conversation sent me down a rabbit hole of research, and what I learned changed how I think about indoor air quality.

Radon gas is a natural radioactive gas that comes from the decay of uranium in soil, rock, and water. It seeps into homes through cracks in foundations, gaps around pipes, and other openings. The EPA estimates that radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, after smoking. For homeowners in Missouri, where geology can create pockets of high radon potential, testing is not just a good idea - it is a necessary step for protecting your family's health.

But not all radon testing is the same. When you start looking for a **radon testing company**, you quickly realize that methods and equipment vary widely. Some companies offer short-term radon test kits that you mail to a lab. Others use continuous radon monitors that provide real-time data over several days. The choice depends on your situation, your timeline, and your goals.

Short-Term vs. Long-Term Tests: What's the Difference?

Short-term radon tests typically last between two and seven days. They are inexpensive and easy to set up, but they only give a snapshot of radon levels at that moment. Because radon concentrations can fluctuate with weather, soil conditions, and how you use your home, a short-term test might miss a peak or a trough. That is why the EPA recommends following up a short-term test with a long-term radon test if the initial result is above the action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L).

Long-term radon tests run for 90 days to a year. They provide a much more accurate picture of your average annual exposure. If you are planning a real estate transaction, though, you often need results quickly. In that case, a continuous radon monitor used over a minimum of 48 hours can give reliable data that both buyer and seller can trust.

Continuous monitors are electronic devices that measure radon levels in real time and record fluctuations. They are more expensive than single-use detectors, but they offer a major advantage: they can detect short-term spikes and provide hour-by-hour data. A good **radon**

testing company will use these monitors because they give a clearer picture of the home's radon dynamics.

Why Hire a Licensed Radon Tester?

I once heard a story about a homeowner who bought a charcoal canister test kit from a hardware store, set it up in her basement, and mailed it off. The lab reported radon levels well below the EPA action level. She felt relieved. A year later, after her daughter developed respiratory symptoms, she hired a licensed radon tester who used a continuous monitor. The results showed radon levels that spiked above 4 pCi/L several times during the 48-hour test. The earlier test had simply caught the house on a good day.

That is the problem with DIY tests. They can give false reassurance. A licensed radon tester understands how to place the monitor, how long to run it, and how to interpret results in the context of the home's construction, the weather, and the season. Companies like Air Sense Environmental in St. Louis have built a reputation on thorough radon measurement that accounts for these variables.

When you hire a professional **radon testing company**, you are paying for expertise, not just equipment. The tester will close the house for 12 hours before the test, ensure proper monitor placement away from drafts and heat sources, and document conditions that might affect the reading. At the end, you get clear results and next steps, not just a number on a piece of paper.

Radon Testing in St. Louis, Missouri

Missouri has areas with elevated radon potential, particularly in the northern and central parts of the state. St. Louis sits on limestone and glacial till, which can contain uranium-bearing minerals. The EPA has mapped St. Louis County and the city in Zone 1, meaning predicted average indoor radon levels above 4 pCi/L. That does not mean every home in St. Louis has high radon, but it does mean testing is warranted.

I have seen homes in the same neighborhood with wildly different radon levels. One house might show 1.5 pCi/L in the basement while the house next door reads 8 pCi/L. The difference comes down to soil permeability, foundation type, and how the home is ventilated. That is why a single test across town tells you nothing about your own home. You have to test your own space.

If you are buying or selling a home in St. Louis, a radon test is often part of the home inspection contingency. Sellers might be nervous about what a test will show, but a radon-safe home is a selling point. Buyers should know that radon mitigation is usually straightforward and cost-effective. A typical system includes a vent pipe and fan that draws radon from below

the foundation and releases it above the roofline. In most cases, radon levels drop below the action level after mitigation.

What to Look for in a Radon Testing Company

Not every company that offers radon testing is equally qualified. Here are a few things to consider when choosing a provider:

- **Certification:** Look for a company that employs licensed radon testers with credentials from the National Radon Proficiency Program (NRPP) or similar bodies. This ensures they follow established protocols.
- **Equipment:** Ask whether they use continuous radon monitors. These devices are more reliable than charcoal canisters for short-term testing and provide data you can review.
- **Experience:** A company that has performed hundreds of tests in your area understands local geology and building practices. They can interpret results in context.
- **Transparency:** A good provider will explain the testing process, what the results mean, and what options you have if radon levels are elevated. They should not push unnecessary mitigation.
- **Follow-up:** After the test, you should receive a clear report with recommendations. The company should be available to answer questions about radon mitigation if needed.

Air Sense Environmental is one such company that meets these criteria. They use continuous monitors, provide detailed reports, and serve the St. Louis metro area. Their approach to radon testing reflects the best practices recommended by the EPA and the Missouri Department of Health.

Understanding Radon Exposure and Health Risks

Radon exposure is measured in picocuries per liter of air. The EPA action level is 4 pCi/L. If your home tests above this, you should take steps to reduce radon levels. Even levels between 2 and 4 pCi/L carry some risk, and the EPA recommends considering mitigation in that range.

The health risks are real. Radon decay products attach to dust particles in the air. When you breathe them in, they lodge in your lung tissue and emit alpha particles that damage DNA. Over years of exposure, this damage can lead to lung cancer. The risk increases with both the concentration of radon and the duration of exposure. That is why long-term testing is more meaningful than a single short-term snapshot.

I once spoke with a homeowner in Creve Coeur who had lived in her house for 20 years without testing. When she finally did, the continuous monitor showed an average of 6.5 pCi/L. She was shocked. Her mitigation system cost about \$1,500, and her follow-up tests showed levels below 1 pCi/L. She told me she wished she had tested when she first moved in. Now, she tests every two years as a precaution.

Radon Testing and Real Estate Transactions

In a real estate transaction, radon testing is often a point of negotiation. Buyers can request a test as part of the inspection, and sellers can choose to test proactively to avoid surprises. A pre-listing test gives the seller time to mitigate before putting the house on the market, which can speed up the sale and eliminate a contingency.

When I sold my first home, I tested for radon before listing. The result came back at 3.2 pCi/L, which is below the action level but not ideal. I decided to install a mitigation system anyway, because I knew that some buyers would be concerned. After mitigation, the radon level dropped to 0.8 pCi/L. I put that information in the listing, and it gave buyers confidence. The house sold quickly.

A reliable [radon testing company](#) can guide you through this process. They can help you understand what the numbers mean and whether mitigation is necessary. They can also provide documentation that satisfies all parties in the transaction.

Final Thoughts on Radon Testing

Radon is an invisible threat, but it is one you can manage with the right information and the right help. Testing is the first step. Whether you use a short-term radon test kit or hire a professional with a continuous radon monitor, the important thing is to test. If you live in an area with high radon potential, like St. Louis, Missouri, testing should be on your to-do list.

Choosing a qualified radon testing company gives you peace of mind. You are not just buying a test; you are buying expertise, reliable equipment, and a clear path forward. The cost is modest compared to the health risks of long-term radon exposure. And once you know your home's radon levels, you can decide whether mitigation is needed. A radon-safe home is a healthier home, and that is something every family deserves.