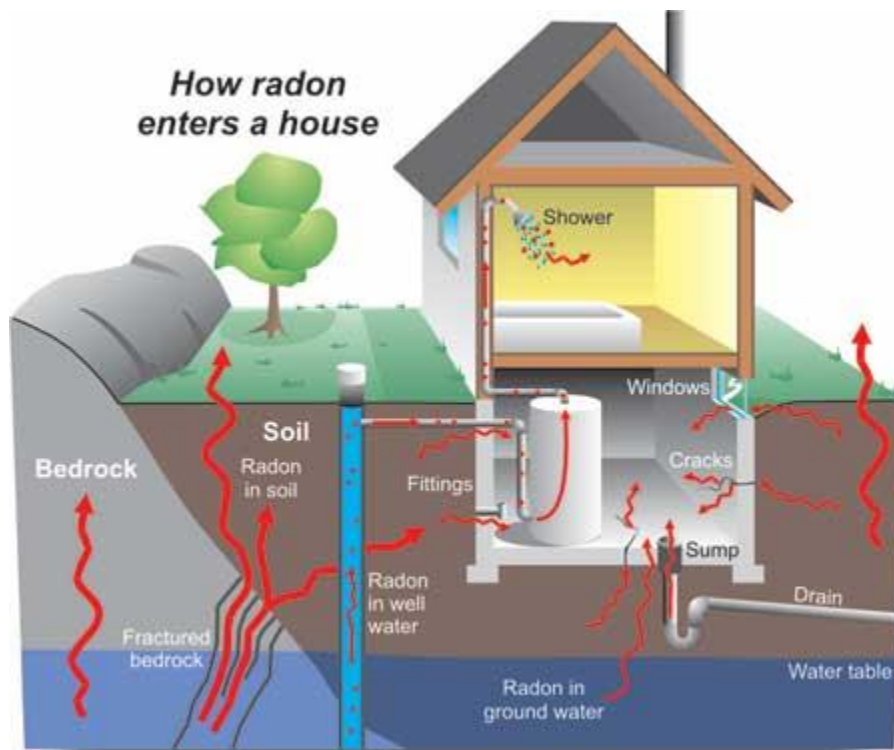


Policy Brief - Public Health Significance of Radon Testing in St. Mary's County

Radon is an invisible, radioactive gas created during the natural breakdown of uranium in rocks and soils. It is found in nearly all soils. Radon typically moves up through the ground and into homes and buildings through cracks and other holes in the foundation, although there are other radon sources.

Radon can enter a home from the soil beneath a home through cracks and other openings in a building's foundation. Entry points in a building envelope (foundation, floor, walls, and roof), can include cracks in concrete floors and walls, construction joints, gaps around service pipes, and other penetrations through foundations and walls. It can create a serious health risk. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), radon is responsible for roughly 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year. In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers.

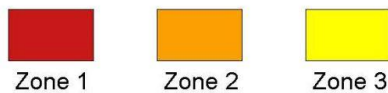
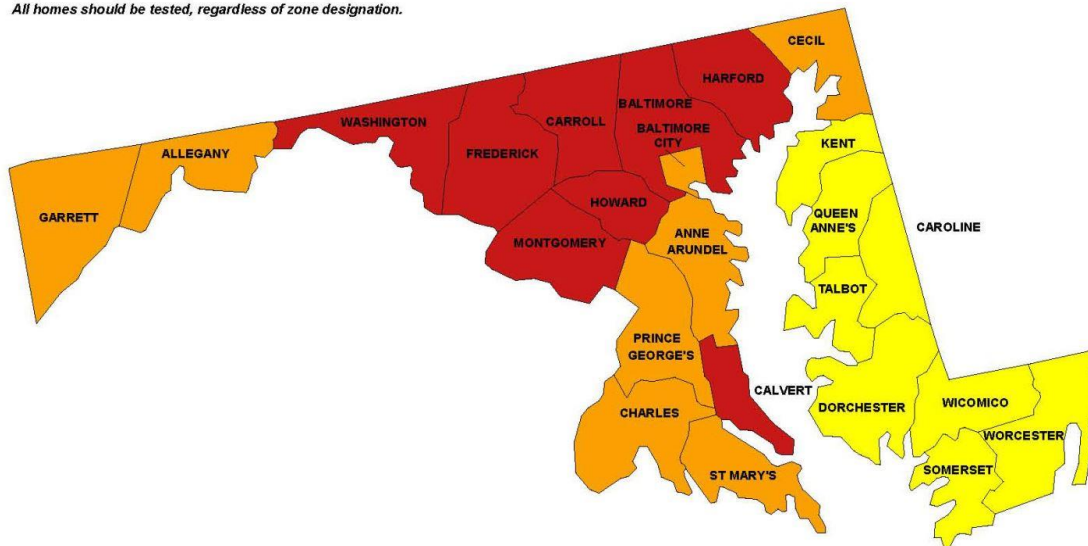
Breathing air that contains radon can cause lung cancer. In fact, the United States Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today, and is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers. If you smoke and your home has high radon levels, your risk of lung cancer is especially high.



Source: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/air/radon.html>

EPA Designated Indoor Radon Levels for Maryland Counties – St. Mary’s County at Risk for Radon

All homes should be tested, regardless of zone designation.



IMPORTANT: Consult the publication entitled "Preliminary Geologic Radon Potential Assessment of Maryland" (USGS Open-file Report 93-292-C) before using this map. <http://energy.cr.usgs.gov/radon/grpinfo.html> This document contains information on radon potential variations within counties. EPA also recommends that this map be supplemented with any available local data in order to further understand and predict the radon potential of a specific area.

Source: <https://www.epa.gov/radon/find-information-about-local-radon-zones-and-state-contact-information>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has worked with state and federal geologists to develop maps which predict the potential indoor radon levels for every county in the United States. Those counties with the highest potential are designated as Zone 1; those with the lowest comprise Zone 3.

St. Mary’s County has been designated as Zone 2 area which means there is an estimated average radon level between or above the EPA’s 2 to 4 pico-Curies per Liter (pCi/L) action level. The EPA recommends that regardless of zone designation, all homes must be tested for radon.

Testing Your Home for Radon Levels is First Step Towards Assessing Radon Risk and Reducing High Radon Levels in Your Home

To perform the test yourself, pick up a testing device from a home improvement retailer or online. Testing can also be done by a radon professional.

- Short-term devices test over a span of days. They are a quick and inexpensive way to screen for radon.

- Long-term devices measure levels for 3 months or more. They take day-to-day fluctuations into account and provide a better long-term average reading.

If your test results are 4 pCi/L or higher, the EPA recommends further action. For more information on understanding your test results, visit <https://sosradon.org/results>

To locate professionals in your area that are certified in radon testing and mitigation – Visit

- American Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists: aarst-nrpp.com
- National Radon Safety Board: nrsb.org

St. Mary's County can Benefit from Legislation that requires Radon Testing during a Home Sale

For instance, Montgomery County law requires that single-family homes, detached homes as well as town homes must be tested for radon before completing a sale of the home as of October 1, 2016. (<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/green/Resources/Files/air/Radon-Handout.pdf>)

St. Mary's County can similarly legislate a proposal to mandate radon testing for homes sold.