

Pennsylvania Radon Certification Requirements Draw Attention as Testing Season Approaches

New guidance on Pennsylvania radon certification has prompted real estate professionals, home inspectors, and property owners to review their compliance obligations before the peak spring testing window. The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection oversees the credentialing program, which sets baseline standards for anyone who performs radon measurements or mitigation work in the state. With the spring thaw expected to increase indoor radon readings, the timing of the updated requirements has focused attention on who must hold a certification and how to obtain one.

Why Certification Matters in Pennsylvania

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can accumulate in homes, schools, and workplaces. Long-term exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Pennsylvania sits atop significant geological formations that produce elevated radon levels, particularly in the Reading Prong region and areas underlain by limestone and shale. As a result, the state has one of the highest average indoor radon concentrations in the country.

[Pennsylvania radon certification](#) ensures that individuals performing tests or installing mitigation systems meet state-approved training and equipment standards. Without valid certification, test results may not be accepted by real estate transactions, mortgage lenders, or public health agencies. The program also provides a mechanism for accountability, as certified professionals must follow established protocols and can face disciplinary action for noncompliance.

Who Needs to Be Certified

State regulations apply to any person who, for a fee, measures radon levels or designs, installs, or repairs radon mitigation systems. This includes home inspectors who offer radon testing as part of a broader inspection, contractors who seal foundation cracks and install vent pipes, and laboratory analysts who process test devices. Exemptions exist for homeowners testing their own residence and for government employees performing official duties, but the exemption does not extend to paid consultants or private contractors.

Real estate agents and brokers should verify that any radon professional they recommend holds current Pennsylvania radon certification. Lenders and title companies increasingly require proof of certification before closing a transaction that involves radon testing or mitigation. Failure to use a certified professional can delay closings or void warranties.

Steps to Obtain Certification

The certification process involves three main components: approved training, a written examination, and proof of professional liability insurance. Training courses are offered by private providers and some community colleges, covering topics such as radon physics, measurement methods, interpretation of results, mitigation techniques, and state regulations. The examination is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and tests knowledge of both general radon science and state-specific rules.

After passing the exam, applicants submit an application along with the required fee and insurance documentation. Certification is valid for two years, after which renewal requires continuing education credits and a current examination score. The department publishes a list of currently certified professionals on its website, which is updated monthly.

Spring Testing Season Creates Urgency

Radon levels tend to rise in cooler months when windows are closed and the house is sealed, but spring is the most common time for testing because homeowners and buyers are preparing for real estate transactions. The EPA recommends testing every two years and after any major renovation, but many Pennsylvania residents wait until a home sale triggers the requirement. That pattern creates a rush of testing requests in March through May, and certified professionals often book weeks in advance.

The Pennsylvania radon certification program includes specific rules for short-term and long-term testing devices. Short-term tests, which last two to seven days, must be placed in the lowest livable level of the home and left undisturbed for the full period. Long-term tests, which run for 90 days or more, provide a more accurate annual average but are less practical for pending sales. Certified professionals are trained to select the appropriate test type based on the client's timeline and the home's characteristics.

Mitigation Standards and Follow-Up

If a test reveals radon levels at or above the EPA action level of 4 picocuries per liter, mitigation is recommended. Mitigation systems typically involve sub-slab depressurization, which uses a fan and vent pipe to draw radon from beneath the foundation and release it above the roofline. Sealing cracks and openings in the foundation is also part of standard practice, though sealing alone is not sufficient to reduce high levels.

Certified mitigators must follow the Pennsylvania radon certification guidelines for system design, installation, and post-mitigation testing. A final test after mitigation must confirm that levels have dropped below the action level before the system is considered effective. Homeowners should request a written guarantee from the mitigator, and real estate agents

should ensure that any mitigation performed during a transaction is documented by a certified professional.

Common Questions and Misconceptions

One frequent misunderstanding is that home radon test kits sold at hardware stores provide the same legal standing as tests performed by a certified professional. While store-bought kits can indicate whether a problem exists, they do not satisfy the requirements of a real estate transaction unless the seller or buyer agrees otherwise. Lenders and title companies typically require a test conducted by a Pennsylvania radon certification holder using approved devices and following state protocols.

Another misconception involves the difference between measurement and mitigation certifications. Some professionals hold only the measurement credential, while others hold both. Real estate contracts should specify which type of certification is required for each task. A professional who measures radon but is not certified to install mitigation systems cannot legally perform the installation, and vice versa.

Enforcement and Compliance

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection investigates complaints against uncertified individuals and can issue cease-and-desist orders, fines, or other penalties. Consumers who encounter an unlicensed radon tester or mitigator should report the activity to the department's radon program office. The department also performs random audits of certified professionals to verify that testing and mitigation records match state requirements.

Real estate offices and home inspection companies should maintain copies of their radon professionals' current certifications on file. Lenders and title companies may request these documents during the underwriting process. Failure to produce them can result in delays or rejection of the testing results, which may in turn delay or cancel a closing.

Looking Ahead

As awareness of radon risks continues to grow, the demand for certified professionals in Pennsylvania is expected to remain strong. The state's certification program provides a clear framework for ensuring that radon measurements and mitigations are performed consistently and reliably. For anyone involved in the real estate industry, understanding the requirements of Pennsylvania radon certification is no longer optional but a routine part of doing business.