

Tips for Working with Your

Local Official

Engaging Your Elected Officials to Promote Radon Awareness

Get your local and state officials involved in radon outreach programs. Elected officials can be valuable allies in educating the public about the health affects of radon and the importance of testing. Use the customizable template on the next page to develop a letter to send to an elected official to recruit him or her to be a radon leader and help save lives. Examples of actions your elected official could take include the following:

- ▶ Issue a press release and conduct interviews with local media about the importance of testing homes for radon and fixing homes with a problem.
 - ▶ Record a radio or video public service announcement to promote radon awareness and testing. Contact the National Council of State Legislatures for more information.
 - ▶ Feature links to your state radon program and to www.epa.gov/radon on your website.
 - ▶ Write a sample proclamation and send it with a request letter (see the request letter template) to the appropriate person in the official's office.
 - ▶ Provide the official's office with information about radon, health statistics and radon outreach community activities. Follow up with the official's office to check on the status of your request.
 - ▶ Coordinate a proclamation signing ceremony and invite the media and community stakeholders. Press coverage can attract attention to the proclamation and radon issues. Ask the official's office if you can post the proclamation in public places.
- If you are seeking a proclamation:
- ▶ Contact your mayor's or governor's office to determine how proclamations are issued (proclamations can take several months so plan early). If your governor is issuing a proclamation, encourage your mayor to do the same.

Template

Letter

to Government Official

[Date]

[The Honorable and full name of official]
[Address of official]

Dear [Title (e.g., Senator, Mayor, Governor) and last name]:

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, responsible for more than **20,000 deaths annually** in the United States alone. *[If available, add local facts about radon].* In support of this effort, I am writing to ask you to help us raise awareness about radon risk in our state, which will help save lives throughout the year.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil and water that can accumulate to dangerous levels inside homes, schools and other buildings. It cannot be seen and has no odor; the only way a family can know if their house has a radon problem is if they test for it. The good news is that radon problems can be fixed. Getting the word out to your constituents about the importance of testing for radon and fixing a radon problem can **save lives** in our state/communities.

Here are four important **actions you can take** to get the word out about radon and save lives in our community:

- ▶ **Proclaim Radon is a threat** in our state/community and hold a proclamation signing ceremony with key health officials, community activists and the press.
- ▶ **Use your Website** to spread the word about radon risk. Provide a link to EPA's radon page and to our state radon program at [state radon page].
- ▶ **Conduct an interview with local media** – In addition to traditional radio, television and print media, consider podcasts or other emerging media.
- ▶ **Attend a local radon event** – See www.epa.gov/radon/nram/activities.html to find events in our area to promote radon awareness in our state/community.

With your leadership we can prevent lung cancer deaths in our community by educating the public about the danger of radon. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Name]
[Organization]
[Phone Number/Email Address]

Proclamation Letter

to Government Official

[Date]

[The Honorable and full name of official]
 [Title of official]
 [Address of official]

Dear [Honorific and name]:

I am writing to request that you support radon risk reduction in [county/city/town and/or state]. Your proclamation would be in conjunction with other cities and states around the country who, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

In [area], radon is present at elevated levels in about [X]% of homes (information available from your state radon office).

One in 15 homes across the United States has elevated radon levels. With more than 20,000 deaths each year, radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers. [organization name], in conjunction with EPA, will strengthen our efforts to educate the public about the dangers of radon and what can be done to minimize the health risk from exposure to elevated levels of indoor radon. As part of our education efforts we will: [insert activities].

I have enclosed a fact sheet that will give you more information about the dangers of exposure to indoor radon. I have also taken the liberty of drafting a template proclamation for your consideration. We would be truly honored to have your support. Please contact me if you require any additional information. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

[Your name]
 [Title]
 [Organization]
 [Phone number/Email address]

YOUR CITY, COUNTY, OR STATE



YOUR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE

[County Executive's, Mayor's, Governor's] Proclamation In Support of Radon Risk Reduction in [County, City, and/or State]

WHEREAS, radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas that threatens the health of our citizens;

WHEREAS, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers;

WHEREAS, one in 15 homes across the U.S. has an elevated radon level;

WHEREAS, any home in [community] may have an elevated level of radon, even if other homes in the same neighborhood do not;

WHEREAS, testing for radon is simple and inexpensive;

WHEREAS, identified radon problems can be fixed;

WHEREAS, [your organization] and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are supporting efforts to encourage Americans to test their homes for radon, mitigate elevated levels of radon, and build new homes with radon-resistant materials and features.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [name], [title] of [county, city, and/or state] do hereby proclaim:

[Dates], [Year]
 In [County, City, and/or State]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this [date] day of [month], in the year [year].

 (Signature of Official)