



### ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## WASHTENAW COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFERS HALF-PRICED RADON TEST KITS

### *Residents Encouraged to Test Homes in Winter Months*

ANN ARBOR, Michigan, January 17, 2012 – The Washtenaw County Public Health Department’s Environmental Health Division is observing January 2012 as National Radon Action Month. To promote this event, **Washtenaw County is offering half-priced radon home test kits from January 17 – 31, 2012.**

“Our goal is to have every resident in Washtenaw County test their home for radon, and to fix the problem if elevated levels are found,” says Angela Parsons, MA, Environmental Health Education Coordinator with the Environmental Health Division.

Radon is a tasteless, colorless, and odorless radioactive gas. It is found in nearly all types of soil and rock. Radon can enter homes through cracks in the foundation, dirt floors, hollow-block walls, and openings around floor drains and sump pumps. Current estimates show that as many as 40% - 45% of homes in Washtenaw County have elevated levels of radon.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers in the United States. Research shows that radon is associated with 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in this country.

“We know that radon increases the risk of lung cancer, for smokers as well as non-smokers. Fortunately, it is one of the risk factors that we can control, unlike family history or genetic makeup,” says Dr. Monique Reeves, MD, MPH, Medical Director of the Public Health Department.

Although no level of radon is considered absolutely safe, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends taking action when levels are above 4.0 pCi/L inside a home. For comparison, the average indoor radon level is about 1.3 pCi/L, and the average outdoor level is about 0.4 pCi/L in the United States.

If a home is found to have elevated levels of radon, the radon can be reduced by installing a mitigation system. Depending on the home and contractor, a typical radon mitigation system costs \$800 - \$1000 in Washtenaw County.

According to Parsons, any home could have high levels of radon. “Your home could have radon even if you don’t have a basement, and even if your neighbor’s house doesn’t have radon. The only way to know for sure is to test.”

**Radon home test kits can be purchased for \$5.00 at the Western County Service Center between the hours of 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.** The Service Center is located at 705 N. Zeeb Rd., just north of the I-94 interchange at Exit #169 in Scio Township. To purchase a test kit by mail for an additional \$2.00, email [parsonsa@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:parsonsa@ewashtenaw.org) or call (734) 222-3869.

The radon test kits will remain available for purchase at the Western County Service Center after January 31<sup>st</sup> at the regular price of \$10.00.

For more information, contact the Washtenaw County Environmental Health Division at (734) 222-3869 or visit [www.ewashtenaw.org/radon](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/radon).

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